Serfojee Rajah. 1827

HENRIETTA.

By Mrs. LENNOX,

AUTHOR OF

THE FEMALE QUIXOTE.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

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THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

HENRIETTA.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

Which introduces our Heroine to the Acquaintance of the Reader in no very advantageous Situation.

ABOUT the middle of July, , when the Windſor ſtage coach with the accuſtomed number of paſſengers was proceeding on its way to London, a young woman genteely dreſſed, with a ſmall parcel tied up in her handkerchief, haſtily bolted from the ſhelter of a large tree near the road; and, calling to the coachman to ſtop for a moment, aſked him, if he could let her have a place? The man, although he well knew his vehicle was already ſufficiently crouded, yet being deſirous of appropriating this ſupernumerary fare to himſelf, replied, that he did not doubt but he could find room for her; and, jumping off his box, begged the company to ſit cloſe, and give the young woman a place.

'What do you mean?' ſaid a jolly fat woman, with a face as red as ſcarlet, 'Have you not got your uſual number of paſſengers? Do you think we will be ſtifled with heat to put money into your pocket?' 'There is room enough for ſuch a ſlender young body as this,' ſaid the coachman, 'if you would but ſit cloſer.'

'Sit cloſer!' repeated the dame, and, ſpreading her cloaths, 'Don't you ſee we are crouded to death: how dare you pretend to impoſe another paſſenger upon us, when your coach is already full?'

'Well,' ſaid a tall lean woman, who ſat next her, 'This is the firſt time I ever travelled in a ſtage-coach, and truly I am ſick of it already. There is no bearing the inſults one is expoſed to in theſe carriages. Prithee, young woman,' purſued ſhe, with an air of great contempt, 'Go about your buſineſs, you ſee there is no room for you—And do you, fellow, get on your box, and drive on.'

'Fellow me! no fellows,' ſaid the coachman, in a

furly tone, 'I won't drive till I pleafe. Who are you, pray, that takes fo much upon you to order me?'

'Who am I, you faucy Jack-a-napes,' faid the lady, 'a perfon that——but I fhall not demean myfelf fo much as to tell you who I am: it is my misfortune to be ftuffed up in a ftage-coach at prefent—what I have never been ufed to, I affure you.'

'Good lack-a-day?' faid the fat gentlewoman, with a fneer, 'A great misfortune truly—I would have you to know, madam, your betters ride in ftage-coaches. Here's a coil indeed with fuch would-be gentry.'

'Good woman,' faid the other, with an affected calmnefs, 'Pray don't direct your impertinent difcourfe to me, I have nothing to fay to you.'

'No more a good woman than yourfelf,' faid the plump lady, with a face doubly inflamed with rage; 'I fcorn your words.'

'Very likely;' faid a grave man, who fat on the oppofite fide, 'but I wifh it was poffible to make room for the young gentlewoman'—'Ah! God blefs your honour,' faid the coachman, 'I thought you could not find in your heart to let fuch a pretty young woman as this walk.'

'Pretty!' exclaimed the haughty lady'—'You are a fine judge of beauty indeed—but I will not fubmit to be crouded, fellow: fo you and your pretty paffenger may ride on the coach-box, if you pleafe.'

'Nay, fince you come to that,' fays the fat gentlewoman, 'I am refolved you fhall not have your own way—The young lady may be as good as you; and fhe fhall not be obliged to ride on the coach-box—So open the door, coachman,' faid fhe, fhoving her antagonift at the fame time with all her force—'Here is room enough.'

A young gentlewoman in a riding-habit, who fat on the fame fide, but next the window, declared that fhe was willing to give part of her feat to the ftranger; and begged the haughty lady to yield. 'Poh,' faid the rofy matron, 'don't ftand begging and praying her; fince you are on my fide, we will be too hard for her, I warrant you.' Saying this, fhe put one of her huge arms round

the young woman's waiſt; and thus reinforced, ſhoved her neighbour ſo forcibly againſt the other window, that ſhe cried out with pain and vexation.

The young lady without, who had been the occaſion of this conteſt, and who had hitherto ſtood ſilent, with her hat over her eyes, alarmed by the ſcreams of her foe, raiſed her head; and in a tone of voice ſo ſweet, as immediately fixed the attention of the whole company, intreated them not to quarrel upon her account: it was indeed, ſhe ſaid, of great conſequence to her to be admitted, but ſhe would not continue to deſire it, ſince her requeſt had produced ſo much uneaſineſs among them.

The paſſengers who occupied the other ſide of the coach were two men and a woman big with child; which circumſtance had made it impoſſible for the men to offer her a ſeat with them, for fear of incommoding the pregnant woman. But the youngeſt of the men having now got a glimpſe of the ſtranger's face, declared that the ladies might make themſelves eaſy, for he would reſign his ſeat; adding, that he was extremely glad he had an opportunity of obliging ſuch a handſome lady. He then jumped out of the coach, and taking the ſtranger's hand to help her in, ſtared confidently under her hat, which put her into a little confuſion: however ſhe thanked him very politely, and accepted his offer; but not without expreſſing ſome concern for the manner in which he would diſpoſe of himſelf.

'Oh! madam,' ſaid the coachman, 'the gentleman may ſit upon the box with me, and he will have the pleaſure of viewing the beautiful proſpects all the way we go.'—'I ſhall ſee none ſo beautiful,' ſaid the young fellow, as what they who remain in the coach will behold.'

The fair ſtranger now bluſhed more than before, and being willing to avoid any farther ſpeeches of this nature, ſhe haſtily got into the coach, thanked the young man a ſecond time, who, having ſeen her ſeated, placed himſelf by the coachman on the box, and they proceeded on their journey.

CHAP. II.

The Commencement of a violent Friendſhip between two young Ladies, which has the uſual Conſequences, a Communication of Secrets, by which the Reader is let into Part of Henrietta's Story.

A Profound ſilence now prevailed among the company in the coach; the eyes of all were faſtened upon the fair ſtranger, who appeared wholly inſenſible of the ſcrutinizing looks of her fellow-travellers. Something within herſelf ſeemed to engroſs all her thoughts, and although by her eyes being conſtantly turned towards the windows of the coach, it might be imagined the paſſing objects drew her attention, yet their fixed looks too plainly indicated that they were beheld without obſervation. Her perſon, though full of charms, and the eaſy gracefulneſs of her air, impreſſed leſs reſpect for her on the minds of the women, than the elegance of her dreſs.

The melancholy with which ſhe ſeemed oppreſſed, conciliated to her the good will of her female fellow-travellers, though from very different ſentiments. The haughty lady, who had refuſed to let her have a place in the coach, found her envy and ill-nature inſenſibly ſubſide, by the conſideration that this ſtranger was probably more unhappy than herſelf.

The luſty matron, pleaſed that by inſiſting upon receiving her, ſhe had conferred an obligation on one who appeared to be of a rank above her own, enjoyed her preſent ſuperiority, and pitied her from the overflowings of gratified pride.

The young lady in the riding-habit, whoſe vanity had been a little mortified at ſeeing herſelf aſſociated in a journey with perſons whom ſhe conceived to be very unfit company for her, thought herſelf very happy in the acquiſition of ſo genteel a fellow-traveller; and as ſhe had not deigned to open her mouth before, from an opinion of the meanneſs of her company, ſhe now made herſelf amends for her ſilence, by addreſſing a profuſion of civil ſpeeches to the fair ſtranger, who replied to every thing

ſhe ſaid with extreme politeneſs, but with an air that ſhowed her heart was not at eaſe.

The paſſengers being ſet down at different places, Miſs Courteney, for that was the name of our fair adventurer, remained alone with the young lady in the coach. This circumſtance ſeemed to rouze her from a deep reverie, in which ſhe had been wholly abſorbed during the laſt half hour; and looking earneſtly at her companion, 'Ah! madam,' ſaid ſhe, in a moſt affecting accent, 'and when am I to loſe you?' 'I ſhall leave you in a few minutes,' ſaid the lady; 'for I am going no farther than Hammerſmith.' 'Lord bleſs me!' ſaid Miſs Courteney, lifting up her fine eyes ſwimming in tears, 'What ſhall I do? what will become of me?'

This exclamation gave great ſurpriſe to the other lady, who from ſeveral circumſtances had conceived there was ſome myſtery in her caſe. 'You ſeem uneaſy' ſaid ſhe to Miſs Courteney, 'pray let me know if it be in my power to ſerve you.'

This kind requeſt had ſuch an effect on the tender heart of Miſs Courteney, that ſhe burſt into tears, and for a few moments was unable to anſwer; when the lady preſſing her to ſpeak freely, 'I am an unhappy creature, madam, ſaid ſhe, ſighing; 'and am flying from the only perſon in the world upon whom I have any dependence. I will make no ſcruple to truſt you with my ſecret. Did you ever hear of lady Meadows,' purſued ſhe, 'the widow of Sir John Meadows?'

'I know a lady who is acquainted with her,' ſaid the other, 'ſhe is a woman of faſhion and fortune.'

'Lady Meadows is my relation,' reſumed Miſs Courteney; 'ſhe took me, a poor helpleſs orphan, under her protection, and during ſome time treated me with the tenderneſs of a mother. Within theſe few weeks I have unhappily loſt her favour, not by any fault of mine, I aſſure you, for I have always loved and reverenced her. Nothing ſhould have obliged me to take this ſtep, which has no doubt an appearance of ingratitude, but the fear of being forced to marry a man I hate.'

'O heavens! my dear creature,' exclaimed the lady,

'What do you tell me! were you upon the point of being forced to a deteſted match?' 'I was, madam,' replied Miſs Courteney; 'and to this hard lot was I doomed by her to whom I owe all my paſt happineſs, and from whom I expected all the future.'

'You have obliged me exceſſively by this unreſerved confidence,' interrupted the lady; 'and you ſhall find me not unworthy of it. From this moment I ſwear to you an inviolable attachment. Sure there is nothing ſo tranſporting as friendſhip and mutual confidence. You won my heart the moment I ſaw you. I have formed a hundred violent friendſhips, but one accident or other always diſſolved them in a ſhort time. There are very few perſons that are capable of a violent friendſhip; at leaſt I never could find one that anſwered my ideas of that ſort of engagement. Have not you been often diſappointed? tell me, my dear: I dare ſay you have. Your ſentiments, I believe, are as delicate as mine upon this head. I am charmed, I am raviſhed with this meeting. Who would have imagined that by chance, and in a ſtage-coach, I ſhould have found what I have ſo earneſtly ſought for theſe three months, a perſon with whom I could contract a violent friendſhip, ſuch as minds like ours are only capable of feeling.'

'I am extremely obliged to you, madam, for your good opinion,' ſaid Miſs Courteney; 'I hope I ſhall never be ſo unfortunate as to forfeit it; indeed I have reaſon to think that in my preſent diſtreſſed ſituation, a friend is a bleſſing ſent from heaven.'

'Well! but my dear Clelia,' ſaid this flighty lady, 'you have not told me all your ſtory—I call you Clelia, becauſe you know it is ſo like common acquaintance to addreſs one another by the title of Miſs ſuch a one—Romantic names give a ſpirit to the correſpondence between ſuch friends as you and I are; but perhaps you may like another name better than Clelia; though I think that is a mighty pretty one, ſo ſoft and gliding, Clelia, Clelia—tell me, do you like it, my dear?'

'Call me what you pleaſe,' ſaid Miſs Courteney,

ſmiling a little at the ſingularity of her new friend; 'but my name is Courteney.'

'Courteney is a very pretty ſirname,' ſaid the lady; 'I hope it is not diſgraced with any odious vulgar name, ſuch as Molly, or Betty, or the like.'

'I was chriſtened Henrietta, after my mother,' ſaid Miſs Courteney. 'Henrietta is well enough—returned the other; but poſitively, my dear, you muſt aſſume the name of Clelia when you write to me; for we muſt correſpond every hour—Oh! what a raviſhing pleaſure it is to indulge the overflowings of one's heart upon paper! Remember to call me Celinda in your letters; and in all our private converſations, we ſhall have a thouſand ſecrets to communicate to each other. But I am impatient to know all your ſtory; it muſt needs be very romantic and pretty.'

'Alas!' ſaid the charming Henrietta, 'this is no time to relate my misfortunes; we are entered into Hammerſmith, and there you ſay you muſt leave me: give me your advice, dear madam, as to the manner in which I muſt diſpoſe of myſelf.'

'*Dear madam,*' repeated the lady—'is that the ſtyle then you reſolve to uſe; have you forgot that we have contracted a violent friendſhip, and that I am your Celinda, and you my Clelia.'

'I beg your pardon,' ſaid Henrietta; 'I did not think of that name: well then, dear Celinda, what would you adviſe me to do? I am going to London, there to conceal myſelf from the ſearch that lady Meadows will doubtleſs make for me when ſhe hears I have left her houſe: all my hope of a reconciliation with her is through the interpoſition of a friend. I have a brother, who has been abroad theſe ten years, and whom I every day expect to hear is arrived; but I dare not ſhow myſelf to any of lady Meadows's acquaintance, leſt I ſhould be hurried back, and ſacrificed to what ſhe calls my intereſt. I know ſo little of the town, that I am afraid I may take up my reſidence in an improper houſe, among people where my honour, or at leaſt my reputation, may be in danger Direct me, dear madam—My dear Celinda, I would ſay

direct me what to do in this dreadful dilemma.' Here ſhe pauſed, anxiouſly expecting the anſwer of her new friend, which will be found in the following chapter.

CHAP. III.

Which illuſtrates an Obſervation of Rochefoucault's, that in the Misfortunes of our Friends, there is always ſomething that does not diſpleaſe us.

'I Proteſt, my deareſt Clelia,' ſaid the lady, 'your fears are very natural upon this occaſion. I ſhould in your ſituation be almoſt diſtracted. Even our parents' watchful cares are hardly ſufficient to guard us againſt the attempts of inſolent men: how much more then are thoſe attempts to be dreaded, when we are left defenceleſs and expoſed. Believe me, my dear, I ſympathize truly with you in this misfortune. Good Heaven! I think I ſhould die with apprehenſion were I in your caſe.'

'Don't terrify me,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, trembling. 'I have taken an imprudent ſtep, but I muſt make the beſt of it now: Providence, I hope, will be my guard.

'I would not terrify you, my dear,' ſaid the lady; 'but I muſt repeat, that were I in your caſe, I think my fears would diſtract me. Thank Heaven! I am protected by watchful parents, cautious relations, and prudent friends; yet hardly thus can I think myſelf ſecure from thoſe enterpriſing wretches the men.'

This young lady had indeed a ſtronger protector than all theſe, which ſhe did not mention, or perhaps was inſenſible of; and that was the extreme diſagreeableneſs of her whole perſon. Her features, it is true, could not be called irregular, becauſe few faces were ever diſtinguiſhed with a ſet more uniformly bad. Her complexion, which was a compoſition of green and yellow, was marveloufly well ſuited to her features. Nor was it poſſible to make any invidious compariſons between her face and her ſhape, ſince it was hard to decide which was worſe.

Miſs Courteney, who had burſt into tears, occaſioned by her reflections on her own helpleſs ſituation, compared with the advantages her friend enjoyed, and which ſhe had ſo oſtentatiouſly enumerated, was upon the point of ſoliciting her advice again; when the lady joyfully exclaim-

ed, ‘ Oh! there is my aunt's houſe, my dear Clelia, we muſt part immediately.’

‘ Sure,’ ſaid Henrietta, ſighing, ‘ you will not leave me till you have adviſed me what to do.’

‘ Lord! my dear,’ ſaid the other, ‘ one young creature is not qualified to give another advice upon ſuch occaſions. I wiſh it was in my power to give you proper advice; you know I have vowed to you an inviolable friendſhip.’ And, —

Here the coachman, as he had been directed, ſtopped before a large handſome houſe; and a well-dreſſed footman immediately appearing, came forwards to open the coach-door.

‘ Hear me one word,’ cried Miſs Courteney, perceiving this tender friend was actually going to leave her without any farther ſolicitude for her ſafety—‘ upon the ſtrength of that inviolable friendſhip you have vowed to me, I will venture to aſk a favour of you: it is, purſued ſhe, that you will recommend me to ſome perſon of your acquaintance in London, who may direct me to a decent houſe, where I can remain in ſafety till my brother's arrival.’

‘ I vow this is a lucky thought,’ ſaid the lady; ‘ I believe I can ſerve you, my dear Clelia; but you muſt ſtep in with me to my aunt's. John,’ ſaid ſhe to the ſervant, ‘ is my aunt at home.’ The man told her his lady was juſt gone to take an airing.

‘ That's well,’ ſaid the lady; ‘ we ſhall have an opportunity to ſettle this matter: but, my dear Clelia, I think it will be beſt to diſcharge the coach, the fellow poſſibly will not wait. I'll ſend my aunt's ſervant to take a place for you in the Hammerſmith ſtage, which I know does not ſet out this half hour.’

Henrietta readily complied, overjoyed that ſhe had really found a ſincere friend in the perſon of this whimſical lady; who, having led her into a large well-furniſhed parlour, ordered ſome tea to be brought, and then told her, that ſhe would give her a letter to her milliner, who was a very good ſort of a woman, and where ſhe might depend upon being abſolutely ſafe.

‘ When I was laſt in town,’ purſued ſhe, ‘ which was

about three weeks ago, her firſt floor was empty; and in this ſeaſon of the year, I believe ſhe will let it to you for two guineas a week.'

'A ſingle room will do for me,' ſaid Miſs Courteney; 'my circumſtances do not entitle me to magnificent lodgings, and my buſineſs is to keep myſelf private.'

'Well, well, my dear, be that as you pleaſe,' ſaid the other; 'I will write the letter without mentioning what lodgings you require.' Saying this, ſhe called for pens and paper; and having wrote the following billet, gave it to Miſs Courteney for her peruſal.

'*Dear Mrs. Egret,*

'THE lady who will deliver you this, is one for whom I have the moſt violent friendſhip imaginable. You know how ardent my friendſhips are; but I think I never had any ſo firmly rooted as this, though our acquaintance commenced but a few hours ago. This dear friend having deſired me to recommend her to ſome perſon to lodge with, I thought of you, knowing you can accommodate her with genteel apartments. I am, dear Mrs. Egret, Your humble ſervant, E. WOODBY.'

Henrietta having read the letter, returned it again into the hands of her friend, gratefully acknowledging the favour, although ſhe had ſome objections to it; for ſhe did not approve of the words genteel apartments, being reſolved not to exceed a very moderate price: but ſhe rightly conceived that Miſs Woodby rather liſtened to her own pride than her conveniency, by throwing in that circumſtance, and therefore took no notice of it.

The letter being ſealed and directed, Miſs Courteney carefully depoſited it in her pocket, and the two ladies were preparing to drink their tea, when the footman entered, and ſaid the ſtage-coach was juſt going off: our fair traveller inſtantly roſe up, and took leave of her friend, who having prevailed upon her to drink a glaſs of wine and water, ſince ſhe was diſappointed of her tea, parted with her with an affectionate embrace, and a promiſe that ſhe would ſee her in town very ſhortly.

Miſs Courteney finding only one paſſenger in the coach, who was a grave elderly woman, ſhe reſumed her journey with ſome kind of chearfulneſs, having thus happily

got over her apprehensions of falling into bad company, where chance might have directed her to lodge.

CHAP. IV.

In which our Heroine, through Inattention, falls into the very Difficulty she had taken such Pains to avoid.

BUT this cessation from uneasiness did not last long: for the mind which can fasten with violence but upon one circumstance of distress at a time, and being suddenly relieved from that, is sensible of a calm, which, compared with its former feelings, may be called pleasure, yet soon selects another object to engross its attention, and fixes on it with equal anxiety and solicitude. Thus it fared with our lovely heroine, whose other cares had all been swallowed up in reflections on the danger to which her honour was exposed. Eased of these apprehensions by the good offices of Miss Woodby, she was happy for a few moments, till the consequences of her flight rushed full upon her mind: lady Meadows's favour irrecoverable; her fortune ruined; her reputation blasted. This last thought, which, from the delicacy of her sentiments, gave her the deepest regret, dwelt most upon her mind; and forgetting that she was not alone, she clasped her hands together in a violent emotion, and burst into tears.

The old gentlewoman, who had been eyeing her very attentively, not a little surprised at the seriousness that appeared in the looks and behaviour of so young a creature, eagerly asked her, What was the matter?

Henrietta, roused by this question, which, (so absent had she been) first informed her she was observed, wiped her eyes, and composing her countenance, said she was often low-spirited.

'Don't tell me of low spirits,' said the old gentlewoman, 'such young bodies as you are not low-spirited for nothing. What! I warrant you, there is a sweetheart in the case.'

'Oh! no, madam,' said Miss Courteney, blushing, 'no sweetheart, I assure you.'

'No, really,' reſumed ſhe; 'well then, I ſuppoſe you have loſt a friend.'

'I have indeed loſt a friend,' ſaid the young lady; hoping that acknowledgment would put an end to the queſtions of her fellow-traveller.

'Indeed!' ſaid the old woman; 'and this friend—— is it a father, or mother, or ſiſter, or——

'All, all,' interrupted Miſs Courteney; burſting again into tears.

'How all?' repeated the old woman. 'Have you juſt now loſt all theſe relations?

'I loſt them all in loſing that friend, madam,' ſaid Henrietta; vexed that her ſenſibility, wakened by ſuch queſtions, had made her too little guarded in her expreſſions.

'Oh, oh, I underſtand you, child,' ſaid the good gentlewoman: 'this perſon, I don't aſk you whether it was a man or woman, was to you both father and mother. Well; and ſo I ſuppoſe you have juſt heard of the death of this good friend, and are going to town on that occaſion.'

Miſs Courteney finding that the inquiſitive temper of her fellow-traveller was likely to lead her into a diſcovery of her ſituation, choſe rather to be ſilent than violate truth, by feigning circumſtances, to deceive her; and, fortunately for her, ſhe was prevented from ſuffering more diſagreeable interrogatories, by the coach ſuddenly ſtopping at an inn in Piccadilly, where it put up.

The old gentlewoman, however, at parting, aſked her what part of the town ſhe was going to, and offered, if it was in her way, to accompany her; but Henrietta evaded the queſtion and the offer, by telling her, that ſhe ſhould take a chair. The coachman accordingly called one for her, which ſhe entered immediately; and being aſked by the chairman where ſhe would pleaſe to be carried? ſhe recollected with great confuſion, that Miſs Woodby had not told her where her milliner lived.

She now ſought for the letter, hoping there was a full direction upon that. But what was her grief and perplexity, when ſhe found the ſuperſcription contained only

these words 'For Mrs. Egret.' 'Good Heaven!' exclaimed the fair unfortunate, 'what ſhall I do now?

The chairman repeating his queſtion; ſhe told him that ſhe had forgot a direction, and aſked him, if he knew where Mrs. Egret, a milliner, lived? The fellow replied in the negative; but added, that he would enquire. He accordingly ſtepped into the neareſt ſhop, which was a haberdaſher's, and making a ſmall blunder in the name, which the perſon he ſpoke to miſtook for Eccles, he was told, that the milliner he enquired for lived in Charles ſtreet.

The fellow returned extremely pleaſed with his ſucceſs, and relieved the young lady from her anxiety, who bid him carry her directly to Charles ſtreet; and ſhe ſoon found herſelf at the door of a milliner's ſhop, where ſhe diſcharged her chairmen; and entering, aſked a young woman, whom ſhe ſaw at work, if her miſtreſs was at home?

The girl deſired her to walk into a parlour, where ſhe was met by an agreeable well-dreſſed woman, who received her with great politeneſs, and deſired to know her commands.

'I have a letter for you,' ſaid Henrietta, putting it into her hands, 'from a young lady, a cuſtomer of yours, the contents will acquaint you with my buſineſs.'

The milliner took the letter, and having read it, returned it again with a ſmile, ſaying, 'She was not the perſon to whom it was addreſſed.'

'No! madam,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, exceſſively ſurpriſed, 'Is not your name Egret?

'My name is Eccles, madam,' ſaid the milliner. 'Bleſs me!' cried Miſs Courteney, 'the chairmen have made a miſtake: I bid one of them enquire where Mrs. Egret, a milliner, lived, and he was directed hither. I ſhall be obliged to you, purſued Henrietta, if you will let your maid call a chair.'

'To be ſure, madam,' ſaid the milliner; 'but do you not know where this Mrs. Egret lives?'

'I have unfortunately forgot to get a direction,' re-

turned the young lady; 'but I hope you can inform me.'

'I wiſh I could, madam,' ſaid the milliner; 'but really I know no ſuch perſon as Mrs. Egret.' 'Surely I am the moſt unfortunate creature in the world!' cried Henrietta.

'I hope not, madam,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles, with a look of great complacency: 'there are more perſons, beſides Mrs. Egret, who would be glad to accommodate you with lodgings. I wiſh mine were good enough for you.'

'Oh! I dare ſay they are good enough,' replied Miſs Courteney; 'but I was recommended to Mrs. Egret, and—' 'Pray madam, walk up, and look at my firſt floor,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles; and, without waiting for any reply, immediately led the way.

Henrietta followed in ſuch perplexity of mind, that ſhe hardly knew what ſhe did; and, while the officious milliner led her from room to room, expatiating at large upon the conveniences, Miſs Courteney continued ſilent, revolving in her thoughts the dilemma to which ſhe was reduced.

The evening was ſo far advanced, that ſhe could not think of going in queſt of Mrs. Egret, of whom ſhe could get no information here; yet ſhe was not able to reſolve upon taking lodgings in the houſe of a perſon to whom ſhe was an abſolute ſtranger: a misfortune which ſhe had vainly endeavoured to avoid by the application ſhe had made to Miſs Woodby.

'I am afraid you don't like this apartment, madam,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles; who obſerved her look penſive and uneaſy. 'I have no objection to it,' ſaid Miſs Courteney; 'but that it is rather too good. I do not propoſe to go to a high price; a bedchamber and the uſe of a parlour will be ſufficient for me.'

The milliner looked a little diſſatisfied at theſe words, but told her ſhe could accommodate her with a large handſome bedchamber up two pair of ſtair, but added, that ſhe had no other parlour than that which ſhe kept for her own uſe.

Miſs Courteney deſired to ſee the room, which was in-

deed very handſome and convenient; and the milliner, perceiving ſhe liked it, told her, that ſhe ſhould be welcome to the uſe of the dining-room till her firſt floor was let.

The young lady thought this an obliging propoſal; and, being pleaſed with the woman's countenance and behaviour, ventured to make an agreement with her, and every thing being ſettled upon very eaſy terms, 'there is but one difficulty remaining,' ſaid ſhe, with an engaging ſmile, 'and that I know not how we ſhall get over; we are ſtrangers to each other.'

'Oh, madam,' interrupted Mrs. Eccles, 'though it is not my cuſtom to take in lodgers without having a character, yet I can have no ſcruple with regard to a lady of your appearance. As for me, I have lived a great many years in this neighbourhood, and am not afraid of having my character enquired into.'

She ſpoke this with a little warmth, which made Henrietta imagine ſhe expected the ſame degree of confidence ſhe had ſhown: ſo making a merit of neceſſity, ſhe appeared very well ſatisfied, and immediately took poſſeſſion of her new apartment.

CHAP. V.

Which contains nothing but very common Occurrences.

MRS. Eccles being ſummoned into her ſhop by a cuſtomer, Miſs Courteney deſired her to ſend up pen, ink, and paper, being reſolved to write to Miſs Woodby that night, and acquaint her with the diſappointment ſhe had met with. The maid ſoon appeared with candles and all the materials for writing; delivering at the ſame time her miſtreſs's compliments to the young lady, and a requeſt that ſhe would favour her with her company to ſupper. Miſs Courtney promiſed to wait on her, provided ſhe was alone; and, ſitting down, wrote the following letter to her new friend.

'YOU will, no doubt, my dear miſs Woodby, be both ſurpriſed and grieved to know that your kind intentions have been fruſtrated; and that by forgetting to give me a direction, your recommendation to Mrs. Egret has proved uſeleſs to me. By

a miſtake of the chairman, who I deſired to enquire where Mrs. Egret lived, I was brought to another milliner's, and ſhe not being able to direct me where to find her, I am obliged to take up my lodging with a ſtranger. It was my apprehenſion of what has befallen me, that induced me to truſt you with my ſecret, a ſecret of the higheſt importance to me; and moſt generouſly did you repay my confidence by your ready aſſiſtance. It was my ill fortune which ordered it ſo, that I ſhould not profit by your kindneſs. However, my gratitude is equally engaged; and, ſince I obſerve nothing diſagreeable in the behaviour of the perſon in whoſe houſe I now am, I ſhall endeavour to make myſelf eaſy here till I hear from you. I long to ſee you, to tell you my unhappy ſtory, to have your compaſſion, or rather to be juſtified by your approbation of what I have been compelled by circumſtances to do. Oh! my dear Miſs, how unhappy is that mind, which, with right intentions, feels a conſciouſneſs of ſomething wrong in its reſolutions! Direct for me by the name of Benſon, at Mrs. Eccles's, milliner, in Charles ſtreet. Adieu. I ſign the pretty name you gave me.

CLELIA.'

Henrietta had juſt ſealed her letter, when ſomebody tapped at the door; ſhe opened it immediately, and, ſeeing Mrs. Eccles, aſked her pardon for not waiting on her before. Mrs. Eccles told her, that her little ſupper being ready, ſhe came to ſee if ſhe was at leiſure.

Miſs Courteney found the cloth laid in the parlour, and an elegant ſupper was ſerved up. Mrs. Eccles did not fail to apologize frequently for the meanneſs of her entertainment, and was gratified with as many aſſurances from her fair gueſt, that no apology was neceſſary. During the repaſt, Mrs. Eccles entertained her with an account of the neweſt faſhions, the moſt celebrated performers of the opera and playhouſes, little pieces of ſcandal, and the like topics of converſation, which Henrietta had often heard diſcuſſed among her more polite acquaintance, and indeed almoſt the only ones that engage the attention during the receſs of the card-table.

The milliner then turning the diſcourſe to the accident that procured her ſo agreeable a lodger, artfully purſued her hints till the young lady found herſelf obliged to ſatisfy in ſome degree her curioſity concerning her ſituation.

Though ſhe was naturally communicative, even to a

fault; yet ſhe did not think proper to diſcloſe herſelf farther, than to tell her, that ſhe had been obliged to come to London upon ſome affairs of conſequence, which could not be ſettled till the arrival of her brother, who was every day expected from his travels.

This account was ſo near the truth, that Miſs Courteney, in the ſimplicity of her own heart, thought it could not fail of being believed. However, the milliner, who knew the world very well, conceived there was ſomething extraordinary in the caſe—nothing leſs than a love-intrigue: nor did this ſuſpicion give her any uneaſineſs. She was one of thoſe convenient perſons with whom a lady, upon paying a certain ſum of money, might lie-in privately, and be properly attended. She made no ſcruple of accommodating with lodgings a young wife, whoſe huſband, for certain family reaſons, viſits her only now and then; and as ſhe generally found her account in ſuch ſort of lodgers, ſhe ſeldom deſired, and indeed was ſeldom encumbered with any other.

The youth, beauty, and elegance of Miſs Courteney, the introductory letter ſo oddly conceived, her apparent perplexity and concern upon her diſappointment of the lodgings ſhe had expected, raiſed ſuſpicions, which the ſtory ſhe now heard, confirmed; and not doubting but this affair would prove beneficial to her, ſhe exerted her utmoſt endeavours to pleaſe her fair lodger, and engage her to an entire confidence.

When the clock ſtruck eleven, Henrietta roſe up in order to retire to her own chamber, to which Mrs. Eccles officiouſly attended her; having taken leave of her at the door, ſhe bolted it on the inſide, and, after recommending herſelf to the protection of heaven, went to bed, but not to reſt. A thouſand diſquietudes kept her waking till the morning, when ſhe ſunk into a ſlumber that laſted till eleven o'clock.

As ſoon as ſhe opened her eyes, ſhe was informed, by the ſtrong light in her chamber, that the morning was far advanced; and, finding by her watch, which lay on a chair near her bed-ſide, how much ſhe had exceeded her uſual time (for ſhe was a very early riſer) ſhe hurried on

her cloaths, and went down ftairs, being extremely anxious to get her letter fent to Mifs Woodby: fhe went directly into the fhop, fuppofing fhe fhould find Mrs. Eccles there; but was exceffively furprifed to hear from the apprentice, that her miftrefs was not yet up.

'I fuppofe,' faid Mifs Courtney, 'fhe refted no better than myfelf laft night, which was the caufe of my lying fo late this morning.'

'La! ma'am,' replied the girl, 'my miftrefs is never up before eleven or twelve.' 'Indeed!' faid the young lady, diffembling her concern at a circumftance which gave her no favourable opinion of her landlady. 'But, madam,' added the girl, 'you may have your breakfaft whenever you pleafe to order it.' She then called the maid, whom Mifs Courteney ordered to fetch a porter, being determined to have her letter delivered into Mifs Woodby's own hands, if poffible. A porter was foon found, who undertook to carry the letter to Hammerfmith as directed; and this affair being difpatched, Henrietta ordered fome coffee for her breakfaft, and retired to her own chamber.

CHAP. VI.

In which Mifs Woodby again makes her Appearance.

IN about a quarter of an hour, Mrs. Eccles appeared, in a long loofe linen fack, being her morning drefs, and infifted upon Mifs Courtney's breakfafting with her; who at length confented, having agreed to pay at the rate of a guinea a week for her board, during the time fhe ftayed, which fhe inly determined fhould not be long.

After the tea-things were removed, fhe went into the fhop to make a purchafe of fome ribbons and gloves; and while fhe was amufing herfelf with looking over a great variety of fafhionable trifles, which the apprentice officioufly fhewed her, a young gentleman, who had been attracted by her appearance, came into the fhop, and afked to look at fome Drefden ruffles. Henrietta, blufhing at the earneftnefs with which he gazed on her, retired immediately, telling Mrs. Eccles, as fhe paffed through the parlour, that there was a gentleman in the fhop. The milliner, upon this information, lifted up her hands me-

chanically to her head to adjuſt her hair, and haſtened to attend her cuſtomer; while her fair lodger, taking a book that lay in the window, went to her own apartment, with an intention to amuſe herſelf with reading till the long'd-for return of her meſſenger.

The book, however, did not ſuit her taſte; ſhe threw it away, and abandoned herſelf to her own melancholy reflections, which were at length interrupted by her landlady, who entered the room with a ſmiling air, telling her, ſhe had had a very good cuſtomer.

'I am glad of it,' ſaid Henrietta.

'Truly,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles, 'I believe I am obliged to your fair face for my good luck this morning.' 'How!—' returned the young lady, with a countenance graver than before.

'Nay, never wonder at it,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles, 'the gentleman laid out twelve guineas with me; but I don't believe he wanted the things he bought. You were the loadſtone,' added ſhe ſmartly, 'that drew him into the ſhop.—He aſked me a hundred queſti ns about you.'

'I am ſorry for it,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, 'I wiſh I had not been in the ſhop.' 'And why ſorry, pray,' reſumed Mrs. Eccles, 'I warrant you are ſorry you are handſome too—However, I have another thing to tell you, to increaſe your ſorrow, and that is, that you have certainly made a conqueſt of this fine ſpark; and, to overwhelm you with affliction,' purſued ſhe, laughing, 'I verily believe he is a man of quality.'

'Do you know him then,' ſaid Miſs Courteney; who could not help ſmiling a littl at her vivacity.

'I only judge by his appearance and manners,' replied Mrs. Eccles, 'that he is a man of rank; but I dare ſay we ſhall hear more from him.' 'Sure— Mrs. Eccles!' interrupted Miſs Courteney, with ſome emotion.

'Nay, nay, child,' exclaimed Mrs. Eccles, 'don't put yourſelf into a flurry; I don't know that I ſhall ever ſee him again—But, pray what book have you got here?' 'One I found in your parlour,' ſaid Miſs Courteney. 'Oh, I ſee what it is,' cried Mrs. Eccles, opening it; 'it is a charming pretty book. If you love reading, Miſs,

I can furniſh you with books; I have a very pretty collection—I ſhould be glad to ſee your collection,' ſaid the young lady, who was apprehenſive of her renewing a converſation that had been very diſagreeable to her.

Mrs. Eccles immediately led her into a little room on the ſame floor, and opening a cloſet, in which there were about two dozen books ranged on a ſhelf, ſhe bid her take her choice, for there was variety enough.

Henrietta ſoon examined the ſo much boaſted collection, which ſhe found chiefly conſiſted of novels and plays. 'Well,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles, 'how do you like my books? are they not prettily choſen?'

'I aſſure you,' replied ſhe, taking down one, 'you choſe very well when you choſe this; for it is one of the moſt exquiſite pieces of humour in our language.' 'I knew you would approve of my taſte,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles, 'but what have you got?—O! the Adventures of Joſeph Andrews—Yes; that is a very pretty book, to be ſure! —but there is Mrs. Haywood's Novels, did you ever read them?—Oh! they are the fineſt love-ſick, paſſionate ſtories; I aſſure you, you'll like them vaſtly: pray, take a volume of Haywood upon my recommendation.' 'Excuſe me,' ſaid Henrietta, 'I am very well ſatisfied with what I have; I have read this book three times already, and yet I aſſure you, I ſhall begin it again with as much eagerneſs and delight as I did at firſt.'

'Well, as you pleaſe,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles, leaving her at the door of her own chamber, 'I won't diſturb you till dinner is ready.'

Miſs Courteney ſat down to her book, which agreeably engaged her attention, till ſhe was interrupted with the pleaſing news of her porter's being returned: ſhe flew down ſtairs; he delivered her a letter, the ſeal of which ſhe eagerly broke, and found it as follows:

CELINDA to her deareſt CLELIA,

'NO words can deſcribe the exceſs of my grief at the news of your diſappointment: but, my dear, how was it poſſible for your chairmen to miſtake the houſe ſo egregiouſly—not know where Mrs. Egret lived!—Fooliſh fellows! ſhe is one of the greateſt milliners in town, and employed by perſons of the firſt

rank. But don't be uneasy, I ſhall ſee you this afternoon: your meſſenger found me preparing to ſet out for town with my aunt —Adieu, my Clelia, and believe me with the moſt unparalleled affection, ever your's, CELINDA.'

The hopes of ſeeing her friend, and being ſettled in more agreeable lodgings, gave Henrietta ſuch a flow of ſpirits, that when ſhe was ſummoned to dinner by her landlady, ſhe appeared leſs reſerved than uſual, and even kept up the converſation with ſome kind of chearfulneſs. Mrs. Eccles, finding her in ſo good a humour, introduced the ſubject which ran moſt in her head—The fine young gentleman, who had been her cuſtomer in the morning, was praiſed in raptures of admiration—ſo genteel, ſo well bred—ſuch ſparkling eyes, ſuch an air of diſtinction—— Every now and then exclaiming—' Well, you have certainly made a conqueſt of him—we ſhall ſee him again, never fear—he'll find his way here again, I warrant him.'

Miſs Courteney, to put an end to this diſcourſe, told her landlady, that ſhe expected a lady to drink tea with her that afternoon; Mrs. Eccles immediately gave orders for the dining-room to be put in order, and thither miſs Courteney retired in expectation of her viſiter. At ſix o'clock a footman's rap at the door announced the arrival of Miſs Woodby; Henrietta ran to the head of the ſtairs to receive her.

' O heavens! my dear creature,' cried Miſs Woodby, ' What trouble have I been in upon your account!—but even the diſquiets of friendſhip are pleaſing; I would not be inſenſible of that charming paſſion, nor without the object of it for the world!'

Miſs Courteney thanked her in very obliging terms, while her ſentimental friend adjuſted her dreſs in the glaſs, and then throwing herſelf into a chair, declared that ſhe was all impatience to hear her hiſtory.

' Permit me,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, ' to inform you firſt, that I am not eaſy here, I do not greatly like my landlady, and I wiſh I could remove this very night.' Miſs Woodby told her it was impoſſible, becauſe ſhe had not yet ſeen Mrs. Egret, but that ſhe would go to her in the morning, and prepare her for her coming.

Henrietta, being now at ease, complied with her friend's request, and began her little history in this manner.

CHAP. VII.

In which Henrietta relates the Story of her Parents, introductory to her own.

'IT is no wonder, my dear Miss Woodby, that at these early years I am precipitated into distresses and dangers; my very birth was a misfortune to my parents, and intailed upon them those miseries which began by their unhappy passion.

'My father was the youngest of three brothers, but so great a favourite of his father the earl of ——, that it was thought he would make his fortune very considerable, having a very large estate, and a very lucrative employment, out of which he every year laid by large sums to provide for his younger sons, of whom my father, as I have already said, was the best beloved.

'It happened one day, that the widow of an officer in the army came to solicit the earl's interest towards getting her a pension. She was accompanied by her daughter, a young woman about sixteen years of age, and who must at that time have been exquisitely handsome, since, after a long series of troubles, and in an age more advanced, she appeared to me one of the most beautiful women in the world.

'The widow, by a certain method of persuasion which operates powerfully on the domestics of men in place, got her petition sent up to the earl. It imported that her husband, after having served near fifty years in the army, had obtained leave to sell his commission for the benefit of his wife and child; that the money arising from it had been deposited in the hands of an agent who had broke a few months afterwards, by which unhappy accident all the money was lost, and this loss had so greatly affected the old gentleman, that he died a few weeks afterwards, leaving his wife and child wholly unprovided for, and made wretched by those very means that were calculated to secure them a genteel subsistence, since by the sale of her husband's commission, the widow was no longer intitled to a pension, which however she hoped to obtain,

in consideration of his long services, and the peculiar circumstances of her misfortune.

'The widow, who knew it was in this nobleman's power to put her immediately upon the list of pensions, conceived great hopes of the success of her application, when, after waiting two hours in the hall, she was ordered to attend his lordship in his library.

'The nobleman received her with civility enough; but his first words destroyed those expectations with which she had flattered herself.

'I am sorry it is not in my power to do you any service,' said he; your husband sold out, therefore you have no right to the pension. I pity your misfortune; but in this case there is nothing to be done.

'The widow was a woman of sense and breeding: she was sensible that the earl paid no regard to her plea, otherwise he would not have urged that as an argument against granting her petition, without which no petition would have been necessary: intreaties she found would be fruitless, therefore she would not descend to the meanness of a suppliant, but curtsy'd in silent anguish, and withdrew.

'My father, who was present at this scene, and who had beheld the decent sorrow of the mother with reverence, the innocent beauty of the daughter with tender admiration, impelled by an emotion which yet he knew not the cause of, hastily followed them, and offered his hand to the widow to lead her down stairs.

'She, who from a natural dignity of sentiment, had been enabled to endure the supercilious behaviour of the father without betraying any signs of discomposure, burst into tears at this instance of unexpected attention and respect in the son.

'My Courteney, as he led her down stairs, had his eyes incessantly turned towards the young lady, who followed blushing to see herself so earnestly beheld. He found they had not a coach waiting for them, he ordered a servant to call one; and in the mean time desired they would walk into a parlour, where he took occasion to

exprefs his concern to the widow for the difappointment fhe had met with; but affured her, that he would employ his good offices in her favour, and from the influence he had over his father, hoped he fhould fucceed. He then defired to know where he might wait upon her, in cafe he had any good news to bring her.

'The widow, charmed with his politenefs, aftonifhed at his kindnefs, and full of hope and pleafing expectation, gave him a direction in writing, which fhe had brought with her.

'Mr. Courteney received it, bowing low, as if fhe had conferred a favour on him; a favour it was indeed, for, by this time, he was loft in love for the charming daughter, whofe looks difcovered fuch foft fenfibility of her fituation, fuch confcious dignity, which misfortune could not impair; fuch calm refignation, as if, fuperior to her woes, that her beauty feemed her leaft perfection; and he was more captivated by the graces of her mind that fhone out in her perfon, than with her lovely perfon itfelf.

'The coach was now come; he fighed when he took leave of them, rivetting his eyes on the young charmer, who modeftly looked down, unable to bear his ardent glances. Again he affured the widow of his fervices; and, fuddenly recollecting himfelf, he put a purfe into her hand, begging her to accept that trifle as an earneft of his friendfhip.

'The lady was fo much furprifed at his behaviour, that fhe was at a lofs in what manner to anfwer him; and, before fhe could form any, fhe found herfelf in the coach, to which he had accompanied her with great refpect. When the coach drove from the door, fhe examined the contents of the purfe, and found five and twenty guineas in it: a prefent, which, if it had been lefs, would have mortified her pride, and, being fo confiderable, alarmed her prudence. She recollected every circumftance of the young gentleman's behaviour, and all contributed to perfuade her, that he was actuated by fome motive more forcible than mere compaffion.

'She remembered that fhe had caught him gazing earneftly at her daughter; fhe reproached herfelf for taking

her with her, for accepting the money, for giving a direction. She dreaded the consequence of having exposed her child to the attempts of a young man formed to please, and by his rank and fortune enabled to pursue every method that could gratify his passions. She began now to be solicitous about the effect such uncommon generosity had on the mind of her daughter. She asked her what she thought of the gentleman who so kindly interested himself in their affairs, notwithstanding the cruel denial his father had given?

'Miss, whose gratitude had with difficulty been restrained from rising from her heart to her tongue, eagerly seized this opportunity to praise their benefactor. Her expressions were so lively, she showed so tender a sensibility of his kindness, such a blushing approbation of his person and manners, that the good widow thought proper to check her vivacity by a little reproof, and attributed all the respect he had shown them to his natural politeness, and his offers of service, and the present he had forced on her, to a sudden sally of compassion which young unexperienced persons are liable to. However, her apprehensions were now increased; and when Mr. Courteney came to see her, in consequence of his promise, which was two days afterwards, she had already taken her resolution.

'She took care that her daughter should not be in the way when he sent up his name; and notwithstanding the politeness with which he accosted her, she observed that he was disappointed, and that his eyes involuntarily sought out an object which he more wished to see than her.

'I don't know whether these little particulars may not seem tedious to you, my dear Miss Woodby; but I have often heard my mother repeat them with delight; declaring that these first tokens of my father's affection for her made so deep an impression on her heart, fluctuating, as it then was, between hope and fear, that she ever retained the most lively remembrance of them; and could never relate them without feeling in some degree the same pleasing emotions with which she was at that time agitated.

'Mr. Courteney began the conversation with assuring

the widow, that he had been mindful of her affairs; that his solicitations had not yet indeed had the desired effect; but that he hoped shortly to bring her better news. The widow thanked him with great politeness for his kind interposition in her favour, which she declared would always have a claim to her sincerest gratitude, whether he succeeded or not in his applications. She then drew the purse out of her pocket, and putting it respectfully into his hands, told him, that not being in any immediate necessity, she begged he would not take it ill if she declined accepting a present which would lay her under an unreturnable obligation.

'Mr. Courteney blushed with surprise and disappointment—but the dignity with which she looked and spoke, making it impossible for him to press her any farther, he received the money back again with a low bow, apologizing at the same time for the liberty he had taken.

'The widow, seeing him disconcerted, politely recommended her interests to him; and Mr. Courteney, charmed that she would allow him to be her friend on any terms, retired with a promise that he would take as much care of them as of his own.

'This interview,' continued Henrietta, 'confirmed the widow in her suspicions, that her daughter was not indifferent to their new benefactor—He had observed her scrupulous reserve with regard to the young beauty, and hoped to remove it by affecting a total neglect of her; so that he did not even enquire how she did.—Whatever is done with design is always overdone: the widow was persuaded that a man of Mr. Courteney's good breeding would not have passed over one of the common forms of politeness, but to answer some secret purpose. Her vigilance increased in proportion to her fears; and although he made her several visits under pretence of enquiring more minutely into the circumstances of her case, yet he never was so fortunate as to find her daughter with her.

'This conduct, while it stimulated his passion, gave him a high opinion of the virtue and prudence of her, who, in such unhappy circumstances, showed such ex-

treme attention to the honour and reputation of her child. Hitherto he had not been at the trouble to examine his own views and deſigns upon this young beauty. Hurried away by the violence of his paſſion, he had aſſiduouſly ſought opportunities of ſeeing and converſing with her; but the difficulties he met with, made him look into his own heart, that he might know if he was ſtill ſufficient maſter of it to give over a purſuit which was likely to prove fruitleſs.

'Amazed to find that what he took for a tranſient inclination, was a paſſion immoveably fixed; that he had formed reſolutions, when he believed he had only entertained deſires; that the whole happineſs and miſery of his life were in the power of a young woman, deſtitute of friends, fortune, hopes and expectations, and rich only in beauty and virtue—for virtuous he was ſure ſhe muſt be, under the care of ſo wiſe and prudent a mother. He was alarmed at his own condition; dreaded the conſequences of a paſſion ſo placed as that it could never procure the ſanction of his father's conſent, and reſolved never more to expoſe himſelf to the danger of ſeeing her.

'However, he did not fail to ſolicit his father very earneſtly in behalf of the unfortunate widow. The earl, who had taken notice of his officious reſpect the day ſhe was introduced to him, and attributed it rather to the beauty of the daughter than any ſentiment of compaſſion, began to be uneaſy at his ſo frequently preſſing him on that ſubject, and forbad him to mention it any more.

'Mr. Courteney was obliged to be ſilent, leſt he ſhould confirm thoſe ſuſpicions which he ſaw his father had conceived; and finding his mind in a very uneaſy ſtate, he hoped that, by removing himſelf to a greater diſtance from the object he loved, he ſhould remove the thoughts of her likewiſe; he obtained his father's conſent to his retiring for a few weeks to their ſeat in the country, under pretence of a ſlight indiſpoſition; but he could not reſolve to go without endeavouring once more to force a preſent upon the widow, which might prevent her being expoſed to any diſtreſs during his abſence.

'He therefore wrote to her, and acquainting her with the ill ſucceſs of his mediation with his father, expreſſed the higheſt concern for it, and aſſured her that nothing could alleviate it but her acceptance of the bank note which he incloſed, and which was for fifty pounds: he told her, he was going into the country, that ſhe might not ſuppoſe he had any deſign of inducing her by ſuch a preſent to admit his viſits; and concluded with aſſuring her, that ſhe might at all times command his ſervices, and rely on his friendſhip.

'He did not ſend away this letter till he was ready to take horſe; and being now more compoſed, from the belief that he had ſilenced the ſcruples of this good woman, and ſecured her and her lovely daughter from any immediate neceſſity, he purſued his journey—full of pleaſing reflections on the diſintereſtedneſs of his love.'

CHAP. VIII.

In which Henrietta continues her Hiſtory.

'ABSENCE (ſays a certain writer) increaſes violent paſſions, and cures moderate ones; juſt as the wind extinguiſhes a ſmall flame, while it makes a great one burn more fiercely. Mr. Courteney's paſſion was of this kind; he had loved with violence from the moment he began to love. In vain he had recourſe to books, to company, to field ſports, and rural amuſements; it was not poſſible for him to call off his thoughts a moment from that object from whom he fled with ſuch care. Two months he wore away in a conſtant perturbation of mind, ſtill flattering himſelf that he was nearer his cure, while his diſeaſe gathered ſtrength every day.

'It happened that one evening he fell into company with ſome officers, whoſe regiment was quartered in that part of the country; and one of them mentioned colonel Carlton, and the unhappy ſituation his widow and daughter were left in.

'Mr. Courteney, rouzed to attention by that name ſo dear to him, pretended to be wholly ignorant of thoſe ladies caſe, that he might indulge himſelf in the pleaſure of talking of her he loved.

'The officer gave him a circumſtantial detail of what

he knew as well as himſelf; concluding with many commendations of Mrs. Carlton's good ſenſe, prudence, and virtue; and ſuch rapturous praiſes of the young lady's beauty and uncommon qualifications at ſuch early years, that Mr. Courteney, for the firſt time ſenſible of the tortures of jealouſy, could with difficulty conceal his emotions.

'You ſpeak ſo feelingly, ſaid a gentleman in company, of this young lady's perfections, that I fancy you are in love with her: come, here is her health; is it to be a match?

'I ſhould be but too happy in ſuch a wife, replied the officer; but ſhe deſerves a better huſband: it is not for a poor lieutenant, added he, ſmiling, to marry for love; but if I was a man of fortune, I would prefer Miſs Carlton to all the women I have ever ſeen.

'Mr. Courteney afterwards declared that he ſuffered inconceivable anguiſh during this converſation. He quitted the company with ſome precipitation; and when he was at liberty to reflect, he reproached himſelf a thouſand times for his folly in leaving ſuch a treaſure for another to obtain. Every man he thought would look upon Miſs Carlton with the ſame eyes as that young officer; and among them might not one be found bleſt with a fortune to make her happy, and above all narrow conſiderations which could hinder him from making himſelf ſo?

'Reſolutions are eaſily formed when the heart ſuggeſts them. Mr. Courteney, who had ſo long fluctuated between his paſſion and his prudence, was, by the fear of loſing what he loved, determined in an inſtant to put it paſt the poſſibility of loſing her. His father's anger, which at firſt appeared ſo formidable to him, was now conſidered as a trifle that would be eaſily got over: he was not going to introduce any ſtale miſtreſs into a noble family, nor to give a comedian or ſinger for a ſiſter to his ſiſters, and a daughter to his mother; alliances ſo much in faſhion with the preſent race of nobility and people of fortune: in Miſs Carlton he ſhould marry birth, beauty, virtue, every perfection but riches; but unhappily

that, in the eſtimation of his father, was worth them all.

'His fortune indeed was undetermined; it might be great, it might be very inconſiderable, ſince it depended upon the will of his father. His father would never conſent to his marriage with Miſs Carlton; but though diſobliged, yet loving him as he did, was it likely that he would always continue inexorable? Beſides he had a certain, though a remote proſpect of a good eſtate, to which he was to ſucceed at the death of a relation, who was old, and had been married twenty years without having ever had a child.

'Should he find it impoſſible to reconcile his father to his marriage, yet he was ſecure at leaſt of a genteel proviſion; but with ſuch excellencies as Miſs Carlton was poſſeſſed of, how could it be imagined that ſhe ſhould not in time conciliate his father's affections, and make him approve of his choice?

'There is no logic, my dear Miſs Woodby, like the logic of the heart. Mr. Courteney, as is uſual on ſuch occaſions, having taken his reſolution before he reaſoned upon the matter, reaſoned afterwards in ſuch a manner as to be ſoon perſuaded his reſolution was right.

'Early the next morning, he ordered his horſes to be made ready, and he returned to London with all imaginable expedition. He alighted at the houſe of a friend, where he diſmiſſed his ſervants and horſes, and then taking a hackney coach, was driven to the ſtreet in which Mrs. Carlton lived. Upon ſtopping at the houſe, and enquiring for Mrs. Carlton, he was told that ſhe had left it five weeks ago, and being greatly indiſpoſed, had taken lodgings at Chelſea for the air.

'Mr. Courteney, who now thought every moment an age till he ſaw Miſs Carlton, and acquainted her with his paſſion and his honourable intentions, procured as full a direction as could be given him; but notwithſtanding his impatience to be with his miſtreſs, he obeyed the dictates of his duty, in firſt going home to pay his reſpects to his father.

'The earl received him a little coldly; an expreſſion of diſpleaſure was on his countenance, which however

wore off by degrees, as he enquired concerning his health, his ſtudies and amuſements, during his abſence. At length ſeeming to recollect ſomething, he went to his cabinet, took out a letter, the ſeal of which had been broke, and delivered it into his ſon's hand, aſſuming the ſame angry countenance as before.

'Mr. Courtney, not able to imagine what all this meant, opened the letter haſtily, and found it was from Mrs. Carlton, dated the very day of his departure, and in it was incloſed the bank note he had ſent: the purport of her letter was to refuſe in a genteel but ſteady manner all pecuniary aſſiſtance from him; however ſhe thanked him for his civilities, and acknowledged herſelf greatly obliged to him.

'When Mr. Courteney had read this letter, which he did with much confuſion, the earl aſked him ſternly, what was his deſign by engaging in ſuch a commerce? You are in love with the daughter, added he, no doubt—but if you corrupt her, you are not an honeſt man; if you marry her, you are no longer my ſon.

'He left him as he pronounced theſe words; and Mr. Courteney, who, while he beheld it at a diſtance, thought his father's diſpleaſure might be borne with, was overwhelmed with the firſt effects of it, and relapſed into all his former doubts, anxiety, and irreſolution.

'He retired to his own chamber, to conſider on what he ought to do; but unable to bear the cruel war which ſuch contrary intereſts, ſuch oppoſite wiſhes, ſuch perplexed deſigns, raiſed in his mind, he hurried out of the houſe to loſe reflection in a variety of objects, and took his way to the Park.

'He walked down the Mall, it was crouded with company, which did not in the leaſt engage his attention; he continued his walk, and, finding himſelf at Buckingham-gate, his ſteps mechanically purſued the road that led to Chelſea.

'As ſoon as he ſaw himſelf near the place where his miſtreſs reſided, all other thoughts were abſorbed in the ranſporting reflection, that he ſhould ſee her within a ew moments; his father's threats were forgot, the loſs

of his favour filled him with no uneaſy apprehenſions To how many revolutions is the human mind ſubject, when paſſion has aſſumed the reins of government which reaſon ought to hold! Mr. Courteney had almoſt imperceptibly to himſelf reſumed his firſt deſign of offering his hand to Miſs Carlton.

'With very little difficulty he found out the houſe where her mother and ſhe lodged; the door was opened to him by a girl, who, upon his enquiring if Mrs. Carlton was at home, told him ſhe was ſick in bed, and, ſhowing him into a little parlour, ran up ſtairs to acquaint Miſs, as he ſuppoſed, that a gentleman was there.

'In a few minutes a venerable old woman appeared, who had ſo fixed a concern upon her countenance, that Mr. Courteney, ſhifting his thoughts from the illneſs of the mother to the apprehenſion of ſome poſſible misfortune to the daughter; for love if it hopes all, fears all likewiſe, aſked her with great emotion, if any thing extraordinary had happened to the ladies?

'The good woman, pleaſed with his ſolicitude, which ſhe thought promiſed ſome relief, told him plainly, that Mrs. Carlton was in the utmoſt diſtreſs; that ſhe had been ill ſeveral weeks; that ſhe had not been able to procure proper advice; and added ſhe, burſting into tears, ſhe has even wanted common neceſſaries.'

'O my God! exclaimed Mr. Courteney, with a deep ſigh; but Miſs—what is become of Miſs? Alas! ſir, replied the old woman, the dear child is almoſt dead with fatigue and grief; ſhe has watched by her mother theſe ten nights ſucceſſively, there is no perſuading her to quit her for a moment? I left her in an agony of ſorrow, for it is believed poor Mrs. Carlton cannot live three days.

'Conduct me to her, cried Mr. Courteney eagerly; I may poſſibly be able to comfort her; let me ſee her, I conjure you, immediately.

'Stay a moment, ſir, ſaid the old woman, ſtopping him, for he was making towards the door; I will go up firſt and inform the ladies. There is no occaſion for that, ſaid Mr. Courteney, Mrs. Carlton knows me very well;

ſhe will not I am ſure be ſorry to ſee me, I have ſomething to ſay to her.

'The good woman, ſeeing his obſtinacy, permitted him to follow her up ſtairs; ſhe gently opened the chamber-door, and, approaching the bed where the ſick lady lay, told her there was a friend of her's, who deſired to ſee her. Mr. Courtney entered that moment, and beheld a ſight which called for more fortitude than he was at that time poſſeſſed of to ſupport without tears.

'Mrs. Carlton lay extended on her bed, ſupported by a heighth of cuſhions to facilitate her breathing, which ſhe ſeemed to do with great difficulty. Death appeared in her languid countenance; and an expreſſion of the tender anguiſh of a mother for the child whom ſhe was ſo ſoon to leave expoſed to the inſults of a barbarous world, mixed with the pious reſignation of a chriſtian, was impreſſed in every line of it.

'Her daughter was kneeling at the bed-ſide, and held one of her mother's hands, which ſhe was bending over in an agony of grief: upon hearing what the old woman ſaid, ſhe raiſed her head; and, directing her ſtreaming eyes to the place where Mr. Courteney ſtood, ſhowed him a face pale, emaciated, but lovely ſtill; at ſight of him a faint bluſh overſpread her cheeks. It is Mr. Courteney, my dear mamma, ſaid ſhe.

'Oh! ſir, ſaid Mrs. Carlton, perceiving him, you are very good to ſeek out affliction thus. I ſhall ſhortly be paſt all my cares; but what will become of this poor helpleſs orphan? The tears that ſtreamed from her eyes prevented her further utterance.

'Mr. Courteney threw himſelf on his knees at the bed-ſide, and almoſt ſobbing with the violence of his emotions at this affecting language, Oh! madam, ſaid he, What muſt you not have ſuffered? why ſhould you not accept what little aſſiſtance it was in my power to offer you. I know your delicate ſcruples—I come to beg you will give yourſelf a right to all my future ſervices—I have ſomething to communicate to you—But, added he, looking at the old woman who had introduced him, we are not alone.

'Speak freely, ſir, ſaid Mrs. Carlton, this good woman is my daughter's nurſe; ſhe knows all my affairs; I am much indebted to her kindneſs and affection for my child.

'What I have to ſay, proceeded Mr. Courteney, relates to that dear, that lovely daughter: I loved her from the firſt moment I ſaw her; ſuch innocence, ſuch beauty, could not ſuggeſt any impure deſire. As ſoon as I knew the force of my paſſion, which abſence firſt made me know, I fixed its purpoſe. Permit me to offer her my hand; I cannot be happy without her.

'What do you ſay, ſir? ſaid Mrs. Carlton, exceſſively ſurpriſed: would you marry my daughter? But after a little pauſe, No, purſued ſhe, this can never be, your father will not conſent to it.

'I own freely to you, madam, ſaid Mr. Courteney, that I have no hopes of gaining my father's conſent; but when the affair is irretrievable, he will be ſoftened, I am ſure he will. Let not this ſcruple hinder you from giving your daughter a protector. Surely, ſaid Mrs. Carlton, lifting up her eyes, the hand of Providence is here; and it would be impious to oppoſe its will. You have my conſent, ſir, ſaid ſhe to Mr. Courteney; would it pleaſed God that you had his alſo, whom it is your duty to conſult on this occaſion, and to obey if you can.

'Mr. Courteney aſſured her he would ſolicit his father's conſent; but that he could not be happy without Miſs Carlton, and was already determined.

'That young lady had retired into another room at the beginning of this diſcourſe, in perturbations which may be better imagined than deſcribed. Mr. Courteney, by her mother's permiſſion, attended her: he approached her with a timidity, which, the inequality of their circumſtances conſidered, may ſeem ſurpriſing; but thoſe who know the nature of a ſincere and violent paſſion, will eaſily account for it. For fear, ſays an elegant writer, always accompanies love when it is great, as flames burn higheſt when they tremble moſt. He took her hand, and kiſſing it reſpectfully, told her that Mrs.

Carlton

Carlton had begun his felicity, by permitting him to offer himſelf to her acceptance as a huſband, but that ſhe only could complete it by her conſent.

'Miſs Carlton bluſhed, turned pale, and bluſhed again: at length ſhe replied, that ſhe had no other will than her mother's. But this offer, added ſhe, in an accent that expreſſed at once her ſurpriſe and gratitude, is ſo generous, ſo unexpected, ſo unhoped for—the laſt words ſeemed to eſcape her; ſhe bluſhed more than before. Mr. Courteney took in all their tender meaning: he kiſſed her hand again in a rapture of joy, and was beginning to make her ſome paſſionate declarations, when they heard the nurſe crying out for help.

'Surpriſe and joy at what had ſo lately happened, operated ſo powerfully on Mrs. Carlton's almoſt exhauſted ſpirits, that ſhe had fallen into a fainting fit. Miſs Carlton eagerly flew to her aſſiſtance, Mr. Courteney followed her with an anxious concern. As ſoon as ſhe recovered, he told her he would inſtantly return to London and diſpatch a phyſician to attend her, and would be with her again the next evening.

'He took a tender farewel of his miſtreſs, and calling the nurſe aſide, gave her twenty guineas to provide whatever was wanting, and haſtened back to London.

CHAP. IX.

The Story continued.

'MR. Courteney's firſt care was to ſend a phyſician to the ſick lady; and that performed, he deliberated in what manner he ſhould acquaint his father with his intention. He knew him too well to hope for his conſent to his marriage with Miſs Carlton, and he had not courage enough to ſtand the reproaches of a parent, whom he was predetermined to diſobey. He choſe therefore to write to him, ſuppoſing he ſhould, when unawed by his preſence, be able to find arguments ſtrong enough to make ſome impreſſion on his mind, and to plead his excuſe.

'As he dreaded extremely a private interview with his father, he was glad to find at his return home, that

a great deal of company was expected that evening; he did not appear till they were all met, having purposely wasted a good deal of time in dressing. The earl was still ruffled with what had passed before between him and his son; and Mr. Courteney observed that his looks and behaviour were less kind than usual.

'As soon as he retired to his apartment, instead of going to bed, he sat down to compose a letter to his father. He began with the highest expressions of grief for having by an irresistible impulse engaged his affections without his concurrence; he justified his choice by every argument that love could suggest in favour of the beloved object: he implored the continuance of his father's affection; and promised in every future action the most perfect submission and obedience.

'This difficult task performed, he found his mind much easier and composed, as if in reality he had obtained the pardon he had solicited, and now resigned himself to all the pleasing reveries of successful love.

'After a few hours rest, he rose under pretence of going out to ride; and, leaving orders with a servant to deliver his letter to his father at his hour of dressing, he went immediately to the Commons, procured a licence, and flew to Chelsea; he found Mrs. Carlton much worse than when he left her; yet joy at seeing him again seemed to give her new life and spirits. She called him to her bed-side; he acquainted her with what he had done; she had some scruples, but the fear of leaving her daughter destitute overbalanced them all.

'I am dying, said she, pressing his hand; the physician you sent was too sincere to flatter me. I die contented, since I leave my child under your protection. Let the ceremony be performed in my presence; after that is over I shall have no farther business with the world. Miss Carlton, drowned in tears, and almost sinking under the violence of her grief, was with difficulty persuaded to give her hand to her lover at so shocking a time; but her dying mother conjured her to give her that last satisfaction.—A clergyman was instantly provided by the faithful nurse: the clerk acted as father

to the weeping bride; and Mr. Courteney's ſervant and the good nurſe were witneſſes.—Never ſure was there a more melancholy wedding—the bridegroom's joy was checked by ſimpathiſing concern—the bride's tender ſenſibility loſt in agoniſing woe—the ſervice was performed with the ſolemn ſadneſs of a funeral.

'As ſoon as it was over, Mrs. Carlton collected all her remaining ſtrength and ſpirits, to pronounce a bleſſing on the new-wedded pair; and ſtraining her daughter with a weak embrace, declared that ſhe was now eaſy, and ſhould die in peace. Mr. Courteney made a genteel preſent to the clergyman and the clerk, and diſmiſſed them: he took an affectionate leave of Mrs. Carlton, who deſired to be left to her private devotions; and earneſtly recommending his bride to the care of her nurſe, he went back to town with a reſolution to declare his marriage to his father; his ſentiments being too delicate and his notions of honour too juſt to permit him on any conſideration of intereſt to conceal the engagements he had entered into, and ſuffer the woman whom he thought worthy to be his wife to live under a doubtful character.

'On his return home he found his letter had been delivered to the earl. His mother, being informed of his arrival, ſent for him to her dreſſing-room, where he found her in tears. She told him that his father had been in the moſt violent tranſports of anger, upon receiving his letter; and ſhe conjured him, if he valued her peace, to proceed no farther in a deſign that muſt inevitably be his ruin.

'Mr. Courteney ſighed, and was preparing to anſwer her, when the earl himſelf entered the room: the impreſſion of his firſt fury was ſtill viſible on his countenance. As ſoon as he ſaw his ſon, he poured a torrent of reproaches on him, inveighing againſt his meanneſs and ingratitude; then ſuddenly, and with great vehemence, uttered the moſt dreadful imprecations on him, if he followed the dictates of his deſpicably-placed paſſion, and married a beggar.

'Oh, hold my lord! cried Mr. Courteney, throwing himself at his feet; curse me not, for I am already married. The earl, almost mad with rage at this confession, spurned him rudely with his foot, and flung out of the room, declaring that he renounced him for ever.

'Mr. Courteney, stung with indignation at this treatment, rose up, and uttered some words of resentment, when his attention was called off from the affront he had suffered, by the condition in which he observed his mother, who, from surprise and terror, had swooned, and lay motionless on the couch, where she had thrown herself. Mr. Courteney, excessively shocked at this sight, rung the bell for her woman, while he applied himself to give her all the assistance he was able. As soon as he saw her recovering, he staid not to increase her disorder by his presence, but retired to his apartment; and after he had taken all the money he had in his cabinet, he left that house that was now become dreadful to him, and went to the lodgings of a young gentleman who had been his fellow-student at college, and whom he had reason to believe his friend, if friendship can be acquired by conferring obligations.

'To this young gentleman he unloaded his heart, but found not the consolation he expected. He expressed the utmost astonishment and concern for his indiscreet marriage; and, instead of offering him any advice in his perplexed situation, or consoling him, oppressed as he was by the displeasure of his father, manifested in so contemptuous a manner, he maintained that the earl's anger was just and reasonable, and exclaimed at his imprudence in ruining himself for a woman.

'Before the mischief was done, remonstrances might have been seasonable; but nothing could be more unkind than to insist upon an error which was already committed, and could not be repaired. Mr. Courteney was at first surprised at this behaviour in a man who had always shewn so deep a sense of his kindness, and professed the most tender friendship for him: but he had still temper enough left to consider, that most people follow their own interests, and are at one time grateful for their con-

venience, and at another ungrateful for the ſame reaſon.

'He left him without taking any notice of the diſguſt he had conceived; and after he had hired lodgings for the reception of his wife, he haſtened to Chelſea, where he arrived time enough to moderate the firſt agonies of her grief for the loſs of her mother, who had expired a few moments before.

'Having given directions concerning the funeral, he forced Mrs. Courteney out of that mournful houſe, and carried her to London, applying himſelf with the tendereſt aſſiduity to alleviate the ſenſe of her loſs, all his own juſt cauſes of uneaſineſs being forgot, and his anxiety for the melancholy future loſt in his contemplation of the happy preſent: ſo true it is that wedded love ſupplies the want of every other bleſſing in life; and as no condition can be truly happy without it, ſo none can be abſolutely miſerable with it.

CHAP. X.

A farther Continuation of her Story.

'IN the mean time Mr. Courteney correſponded privately with his mother, whoſe gentle nature had, with little difficulty, been ſoftened into a forgiveneſs of her ſon's imprudent marriage; but all her endeavours to reconcile the earl to it had proved ineffectual. He continued inexorable, and peremptorily commanded her never to mention that undutiful ſon to him more, whom he reprobated for ever.

'The counteſs durſt not hazard an interview with her ſon, while his father's reſentment continued unappeaſed; but ſhe allowed him two hundred a year out of her pin-money, and upon this moderate income they lived with more happineſs than is often to be found in the higheſt affluence.'—

'And why not,' interrupted Miſs Woodby here, 'a cottage, with the perſon we love, is to be preferred to a palace with one to whom intereſt and not affection has joined us. I know I could be contented to keep ſheep with the man I loved. Speak truth, my dear Clelia, would you not like to be a ſhepherdeſs? O, what a de-

lightful employment, to watch a few harmleſs ſheep! to wander through groves and fields, or lie reclined upon the flowery margin of ſome murmuring ſtream, and liſten to the plaintive voice of the nightingale, or the tender faithful vows of ſome lovely and beloved ſhepherd!'

'What a romantic picture,' ſaid Miſs Courteney laughing, 'have you drawn! It is a mighty pretty one it muſt be confeſſed, but it is not at all like. I remember, when I was about fourteen, I had the ſame notions of ſhepherds and ſhepherdeſſes; but I was ſoon cured. I happened to be at the houſe of a country gentleman, who managed a large farm of his own; one of the ſervants ſaying ſomething about the ſhepherd, my heart danced at the ſound. My imagination repreſented to me ſuch a pretty figure as we ſee on the ſtage in the dramatic paſtoral entertainment of Damon and Phillida, in a fine green habit, all bedizened with ribbons, a neat crook, and a garland of flowers. I begged to be permitted to go into the fields to ſee the ſhepherd, and eagerly enquired if there were no ſhepherdeſſes likewiſe; but how was I diſappointed!—The ſhepherd was an old man in a ragged waiſtcoat, and ſo miſerably ſun-burnt, that he might have been taken for a mulatto: the ſhepherdeſs looked like a witch; ſhe was ſitting under a hedge, mending old ſtockings, with a ſtraw hive on her head, and a tattered garment on, of as many colours as there were patches in it. How diverting it would have been to have heard this enamoured ſwain ſigh out ſoft things to this lovely nymph!'

'Oh! ridiculous,' cried Miſs Woodby—'I am ſick at the very thought; but, my dear Clelia, go on, I beſeech you, with your ſtory.'

'I have not come to my own ſtory yet,' ſaid Miſs Courteney; 'all that you have heard has been only an introduction to it; and I have given you the hiſtory of my parents in the words, as near as I can remember, of my mother; for ſhe loved ſcribbling, and committed the principal incidents of her life to paper, which for my inſtruction ſhe permitted me to read: I ſay inſtruction, for ſhe was a woman of fine underſtanding and deep think-

ing; and ſhe had interſperſed through her little narrative many beautiful and juſt reflections, and many obſervations and uſeful maxims, that her reading, which was very comprehenſive, and her experience furniſhed her with.'

'Proceed, my dear Clelia,' ſaid Miſs Woodby, 'obſerving Henrietta pauſed here, 'I am impatient to hear more.' 'If you pleaſe,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, 'we will drink tea firſt.' 'I have juſt two hours and a half to ſtay with you,' replied Miſs Woodby, looking at her watch; 'if I am at home by nine o'clock, which is my aunt's hour for ſupper, it will do.' Henrietta then ordered tea, which was ſoon diſpatched, and ſhe reſumed her ſtory in this manner.

'My father, who was very deſirous of conciliating at leaſt his elder brother's affections, wrote to him, he being now upon his travels, and gave him an account of his marriage; but his letter, though conceived in the moſt tender and reſpectful terms, produced a cruel and ſupercilious anſwer, which not only took away all hope of his proving a mediator between him and his father, but convinced him that he had in him no longer a friend or brother.

'His affairs were in this deſperate ſituation when my mother became pregnant; a diſtant relation of my father's now took an intereſt in this event, and being very rich and ambitious of making a family, he declared that if the child was a ſon, he would adopt him and make him his heir. You may imagine this deſign was received with great joy; the old gentleman was very aſſiduous in his viſits to my mother during her pregnancy, and ſeemed extremely happy in the thoughts of perpetuating his name; an ambition very common to perſons of low extraction, who, by induſtry and thrift, have riſen to great riches: for he was only by marriage a relation to my father, and had been too much neglected on account of the meanneſs of his original. But all theſe flattering expectations were deſtroyed by my birth, which I had reaſon to ſay proved a misfortune to my parents. The capricious old man was ſo greatly chagrined at his diſappointment, that he transferred all his favours to another

coufin, who was fo lucky as to prefent him with a fon to fucceed to his fortune, and continue his obfcure name to pofterity.

'My brother's birth happened a year afterwards, and unfortunately for him a year too late. My father ftill continued to draw his whole income from the bounty of his mother, who was a conftant but fruitlefs mediator in his behalf: her death, which happened about three years after his marriage, was an irreparable lofs to him; for it was not improbable but the lenient hand of time, which weakens the force of every paffion, joined to her tender folicitations, might have effected a reconciliation between his father and him; but this hope was now no more: the countefs bequeathed my father all the money fhe had faved, which was but a very fmall fum; for fhe had always given with a liberal hand to the poor, though with fo little oftentation, that it was fuppofed fhe had faved fome thoufands out of her pin-money, for fhe was lefs expenfive than any other woman of her rank in England; but it was not till after my father's marriage that fhe began to fave, and then only for him.

'Six hundred pounds was all that was found in her cabinet, which fome months after her deceafe was paid to my father with every circumftance of contempt.

'Thefe repeated calamities were fo far from leffening the love of my father and mother, that they feemed to redouble their tendernefs; feeking in each other that happinefs which fortune denied them, and which they were always fure to find in their own virtue and mutual affection.

'My father, who had had a very liberal education, employed the greateft part of his time in the inftruction of his children: under his tuition I acquired the French and Italian languages; by my mother I was taught every ufeful accomplifhment for a young woman in my fituation; nor did my father's narrow circumftances hinder him from procuring me thofe which were fuitable to my birth. My brother had no other tutor but this excellent father, who qualified him for a univerfity; and

at fourteen years of age he was ſent to that of Leyden, and I have never ſeen him ſince.

'In the mean time the earl my grandfather, who ſtill continued inexorable, was taken off ſuddenly by an apoplectic fit; and having never altered his will, which he made immediately after the marriage of my father, he found he was cut off with a ſhilling. This ſtroke, as it was always expected, was leſs ſenſibly felt than another which immediately followed it. That relation, to whoſe eſtate my father was to ſucceed, having buried his wife, married a young woman, who, in a year afterwards brought him a ſon to inherit his fortune.

'My father, now ſeeing no proſpect of any proviſion for his children, fell into a deep melancholy: he had by the intereſt of ſome of his friends, obtained a place which brought him in between three and four hundred a year; but out of this it was impoſſible to ſave much. The uneaſineſs of mind which he laboured under, corrupted his blood; he was ſeized with a decay, which carried him off in a few months, and deprived his wife of the beſt huſband, his children of the beſt father, that ever was.

'In his laſt illneſs he had wrote to his brother, and recommended his helpleſs family to his compaſſion; but that nobleman, whoſe avarice was his ſtrongeſt paſſion, and whoſe reſentment againſt his brother was kept up by the arts of his wife; her family, though noble, being very poor, and therefore dependent upon him, took no other notice of my father's laſt requeſt, than to ſend my mother a bank bill for an hundred pounds; declaring at the ſame time that it was all the aſſiſtance ſhe muſt ever expect from him; and with this heroic act of generoſity, he ſilenced the ſoft pleadings of nature, and perſuaded himſelf that he had done his duty.

'My mother, being young with child when my father died, miſcarried; and by that accident, together with her continual grief, ſhe fell into a languiſhing illneſs, which threatened a ſhort period to her days. Five hundred pounds was all that my father left: from this ſmall ſum a widow and two children were to draw their future

ſubſiſtence. What a melancholy proſpect! However, my brother, who was then about ſeventeen, had made ſuch great proficiency in learning, that, notwithſtanding his youth, he was recommended by the profeſſors of the univerſity to have the care of ſome Engliſh youths who ſtudied there, which afforded him a decent ſubſiſtence.

'My mother having placed four hundred and fifty pounds in the hands of a rich merchant, who had been a friend of my father's, and gave her very good intereſt for it, ſhe diſpoſed of all her furniture, and with the money ariſing from the ſale, ſet out with me for Bath, the waters being preſcribed to her by her phyſician.

'Not being able to ſupport the expence of living in the town, ſhe took lodgings in a pleaſant village, about three miles diſtance from it; and here, feeling her diſtemper daily gaining ground, ſhe prepared for death, with a reſignation that was only interrupted by her anxiety for me.

'It was not indeed eaſy to form any plan for my future ſubſiſtence, which would not ſubject me to a ſituation very unfit for my birth. Had my brother been provided for, ſhe would have made no ſcruple of ſinking that ſmall ſum that was left, into an annuity for my life, which with economy might ſupport me above neceſſity and dependence. She wrote to my brother, and deſired his advice with regard to me. My brother, as if he had entered into her views, in his anſwer conjured her to have no ſolicitude about him, ſince, with the education he had received, he could not fail of ſupporting himſelf in the character of a gentleman, but to diſpoſe of that money in any manner which might be moſt for my advantage.

'My mother ſhed tears of tender ſatisfaction over this letter, ſo full of duty to her, and affection for me; but the more generous and diſintereſted her ſon ſhowed himſelf, the leſs was ſhe capable of taking a reſolution, which, if any diſappointment happened to him, muſt leave him without any reſource.

'You may be ſure, my dear Miſs Woodby, I was not very forward to fix her purpoſe; for I could not bear the thought of being the only perſon, in our little diſ-

treſſed family, to whom a ſubſiſtence was ſecured. While my mother was thus fluctuating, ſhe was viſited in her retirement by lady Manning, a widow lady of a very plentiful fortune, with whom ſhe had been in ſome degree of intimacy during the life of my father.

'This lady ſhowed great fondneſs for me; and my mother imparting to her her difficulties with regard to ſettling me, lady Manning begged her to make herſelf quite eaſy, for that ſhe would take me under her own care.

'Miſs Courteney, ſaid ſhe, will do me honour by accepting my houſe for an aſylum, and I and my daughter will think ourſelves happy in ſuch an agreeable companion. My mother was extremely pleaſed with this offer; and lady Manning preſſed me to go with her to London, for which place ſhe was to ſet out in a few days.

'I was ſo much ſhocked at the propoſal of leaving my mother in the dangerous condition ſhe was judged to be, that I did not receive lady Manning's offer with that ſenſe of her intended kindneſs which ſhe doubtleſs expected; and when my mother, wholly governed by the conſideration of my intereſt, urged me to go with lady Manning, I burſt into a violent paſſion of tears, vehemently proteſting that I would never leave her; and lamenting her cauſeleſs diſtruſt of my affection in ſuppoſing that I could be prevailed upon, by any proſpect of advantage to myſelf, to ſeparate from her.

'I obſerved lady Manning redened at theſe words, which ſhe underſtood as a reproach for her making ſo improper a propoſal, and which I really deſired ſhe ſhould: for I was highly diſguſted with her want of delicacy, in deſiring me to leave my mother, and her believing it poſſible that I could conſent.

'I ſaw pleaſure in my mother's eyes at this artleſs expreſſion of my tenderneſs for her; but at the ſame time I thought I could perceive, by the turn of her countenance, that ſhe was apprehenſive I had diſobliged lady Manning: therefore I endeavoured to remove her fears by the ſtrongeſt aſſurances of gratitude to that lady. She received thoſe aſſurances with a little ſuperciliouſneſs at

first, but that presently wore off; and at parting she renewed her professions of friendship to my mother, and promises of a parent's care of me.

'She left Bath three days afterwards, so that we did not see her again, which made my mother a little uneasy; but we had soon a very kind letter from her, in which she repeated all her former offers, and expressed great tenderness for me.

'At her return from London, she passed through Bath in her way to her country seat; and, finding my mother much worse, she redoubled her professions of affection for me, and was so lavish in her promises, that she left her quite easy on my account. Indeed, notwithstanding what I have suffered from lady Manning, I shall ever think myself obliged to her for contributing so greatly towards that composure of mind which my mother felt, from the time that she thought me secure of an asylum, till it would suit with my brother's circumstances to take me under his own care.

'I will not, my dear Miss Woodby, enlarge upon the last three month's of my mother's life, which was spent in a constant preparation for her end. Indeed the innocence of her manners, and the unfeigned piety that shone through her conduct, made her whole life one continued preparation for that awful moment, so dreadful to the wicked; so full of peace, confidence, and holy joy to the good. In fine, I lost this excellent mother, and my bleeding heart still feels her loss.'

The tears, which at this tender remembrance ran from Miss Courteney's eyes, made a pathetic pause in her relation; but recovering herself, she proceeded, as will be found in the following book.

BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

In which Henrietta enters upon her own Story, and shews, that to confer Benefits, is not always a Proof of Benevolence.

'THE worthy merchant,' resumed Miss Courteney, 'whom I mentioned to you, had the goodness to

come to Bath, upon the news of my mother's extreme danger. He arrived time enough to receive her laſt intreaties, that he would continue his friendſhip to me. I was then entered into my twentieth year, and choſe him for my guardian; he would have taken me with him to his houſe, but my promiſe being engaged to lady Manning, I was obliged to decline his obliging offer.

'I wrote her an account of my mother's death; Mr. Bale, ſo was the merchant called, would not return to town till he ſaw me ſafely diſpoſed of.

'About three days after I had wrote to lady Manning, I received a letter from her, which was brought by one of her ſervants; in which, after the uſual compliments of condolance, ſhe deſired I would ſet out immediately with the perſon whom ſhe had ſent to attend me. My guardian, for ſo I uſed now to call Mr. Bale, coming in, I told him I muſt prepare to be gone immediately, and gave him lady Manning's letter to read.

'How are you to go, Miſs? ſaid he, after he had looked over the letter. As I never doubted but lady Manning had ſent her poſt-chaiſe or chariot for me, I told him I ſuppoſed there was a carriage come with the meſſenger.

'O yes, replied Mr. Bale, there is a very good pillion, and you are to ride behind the footman, I took notice of the equipage as I came in; but I ſhall not permit you to perform a journey of thirty miles in that manner: therefore, Miſs, I would have you ſend a letter to the lady by her meſſenger, and inform her that your guardian will convey you ſafe to her ſeat.

'I was as much pleaſed with this kind attention in Mr. Bale, as I was ſhocked and ſurpriſed at the ungenteel manner in which lady Manning had ſent for me: however, I concealed my thoughts of it, and wrote ſuch a letter as my guardian deſired me. The next morning at eight o'clock, a poſt-chaiſe was ready at the door, and Mr. Bale attending; all my cloaths had been packed up the night before, and we ſet out immediately.

'Lady Manning received us very politely, and de-

tained Mr. Bale to dinner. I thought I could observe something forced in the respect she seemed to pay me; and I was particularly disgusted with her using the words *Your guardian* every moment, as if in derision of the title I had to one.

'When Mr. Bale went away, he took an opportunity to speak to me apart, and made me promise him, if I should have any reason to be displeased with my situation, that I would write to him plainly, and he would come himself and fetch me away. This tender solicitude in the good old man, affected me very sensibly; and I could not help shedding tears when I saw him drive away.

'Lady Manning was extremely inquisitive about his connexion with me, and asked me a great many questions. I am very glad, said she, your affairs are in the hands of so wise a man; for surely he who can raise a large estate out of nothing, as has been the case with Mr. Bale, must needs be a very wise man, and I don't doubt but he will manage your fortune to the best advantage.

'I was greatly displeased with the first part of this speech, and particularly with the manner in which the word Fortune was drauled out.

'The poor trifle I have, madam, replied I, does not deserve to be termed a fortune.

'I assure you, said she, it was very kind in a man of Mr. Bale's substance, to trouble himself with such inconsiderable matters; and it is a great thing for you to be permitted to call such a man guardian.

'Very true, madam, replied I, with some warmth; and I believe Mr. Bale thinks it no discredit to be called so by a child of Mr. Courteney's, whatever her fortune may be.

'I observed lady Manning to reden at this reply, which at that time surprised me, and I could not conceive the reason of it; but I soon found that it was a mortal crime in her eyes to pretend to derive any advantage from birth. There was nothing which she seemed to hold in greater contempt than family-pride;

and indeed, when unseasonably exerted, it is contemptible; but it was plain that lady Manning did not think meanly of the fortuitous advantage of being well-born, because she envied those who possessed that advantage; and though the daughter of a soap-boiler herself, she was extremely fond of being thought to have ancestors; and it was to gratify her pride, that her husband, who was a rich citizen, by trade a brewer, got himself knighted, that, together with a very large jointure, he might leave his wife the title of lady.

'Surely,' interrupted Miss Woodby, 'this woman had no good intentions when she invited you to her house; it is impossible that such low creatures can have any notion of friendship or generosity.'

'You have guessed truly,' replied Miss Courteney; 'it was to gratify her pride, to have the daughter of a gentleman subjected to her caprice, and dependent on her bounty, that made her so solicitous of having me with her; but although I did not make these reflections immediately, yet I was so disgusted by this first conversation, that I could not promise myself any great happiness in such society.

'Her daughter was now introduced to me, a tall aukward thing about seventeen: she was an heiress; and being taught to believe that riches give birth, beauty, wit, and every desirable quality, she held every one in contempt who was not possessed of this advantage, and because she had it herself, she supposed she had all the others.

'Whatever documents were given her, they were always introduced with—Consider, Miss, what a fortune you are—a young lady of your fortune.—How was it possible for a girl thus tutored, not to derive insolence from the consideration of her fortune?

'The governess, who had the care of this young lady, was not very likely to enlarge her notions—Her only recommendation for such a trust was, that she could jabber corrupted French, without either sense or grammar, and Miss was taught to parler françoise in a broad

provincial dialect; for this governess had never seen Paris, and perhaps had never been out of the little village where she was born and bred, and conversed only with peasants, till she came to England to teach language and fine breeding to a great heiress. It was very natural for lady Manning to make such a choice, who doubtless thought it a great distinction to have a foreigner for governess to her daughter.'

'Nay, my dear,' interrupted Miss Woodby, lady Manning, in this particular, does not differ from many persons of the first quality, who commit the education of their daughters to low vulgar creatures, merely because they are French; creatures that in Paris, or in any of the chief cities in the provinces, would not be thought qualified for a chamber maid to a woman of any fashion, yet when driven into England on account of their religion, as they all pretend, though perhaps it is for want of bread in their own country, derive such distinction from their flimsy sacks, their powdered hair, and their speaking French, that they are thought the fittest persons in the world to form the manners of young girls of quality. How absurd should we think it in a French woman of quality to entertain an aukward Yorkshire girl with a coarse clownish accent, as English governess to her daughter, to teach her the language, and correct her pronunciation? and yet not one in twenty of the Mademoiselles in the houses of our nobility and our French boarding-schools, are better qualified for such an office.—But I beg pardon, my dear, for interrupting you so long: I long to hear what sort of a life you lived in this rich despicable family.'

'Truly,' said Miss Courteney, 'it was not very agreeable, when lady Manning and I were alone, she used to entertain me with an account of her forefathers; she reckoned up among them half a dozen sheriffs, three lord-mayors, and a long train of aldermen. She lamented the death of her husband most pathetically; for if he had lived two years longer, he would have been elected lord-mayor, and she would have lived in the

Manſion-houſe, and been queen of the city—Her own words.

'When we were at table, and the ſervants attending, ſhe uſed to turn the diſcourſe upon the misfortunes of my father, lament the ſad condition to which my mother and I were reduced by his death, expreſs great anxiety about my brother, and enter into a minute diſcuſſion of our affairs.

'When there was company preſent, ſhe would take notice that I was melancholy, and tell me that I muſt not take misfortunes to heart, and then ſigh as if ſhe was extremely affected with them herſelf; by which ſhe recommended me to her viſiters as an object of compaſſion, and never failed by that means to produce ſome inſtance of neglect towards me; ſo powerfully did that conſideration operate upon moſt minds.

'She would ſharply reprehend her daughter for any ſuppoſed want of civility to me, and paſs over in ſilence any real one; telling her that if Miſs Courteney had not a fortune, yet ſhe was a gentlewoman as well as herſelf, and that no body ſhould be deſpiſed for being poor.

'Such were the continued mortifications that I was obliged to endure from this generous benefactreſs: yet I ought not to call them mortifications, becauſe they only excited my contempt: about that time I received a letter from my brother, in which he informed me, that he was going to travel with a young Engliſh nobleman, whoſe governor had died ſuddenly at Leyden, and whom he was appointed to ſucceed upon a very advantageous footing, on account of his birth; he deſired me to draw upon him for what money I had occaſion for.

'I received theſe inſults with the more indifference, as I knew I could put an end to them when I pleaſed, by quitting lady Manning's houſe, which I could now do without any inconvenience to myſelf; and foreſeeing that this indelicacy in her treatment of me, muſt neceſſarily end in ſomething too coarſe for me to diſſemble my reſentment, I was willing to ſtay till ſhe ſhewed herſelf in her true colours, which would be my juſtification whenever I quitted her.

CHAP. II.

Wherein Family-pride awakens those natural Affections which Family-pride had suppressed.

'IT was not long before I had this opportunity. She desired me one day to walk with her in the garden, having something to communicate to me greatly to my advantage; and, after a profound silence of about ten minutes, she looked archly at me, and asked me if I could guess what she had been doing for me? Indeed I cannot, Madam, replied I. Well then I will tell you, said she, nothing less, I assure you, than providing you a husband. Indeed! said I, laughing, and pray, madam, who is this intended husband? Come, come, said she gravely, before I tell you who he is, you must promise me to make no silly objections; such as age, not being a fine gentleman, and the like. The person I have in my eye for you is a sober staid man, and blessed with means to support you handsomely, without depending upon any body. That indeed is something, replied I; but who is this person, Madam? I have a good mind, said she, to tantalize you a little, by keeping you in suspense;—but in short, the person I mean is honest Mr. Vellum.

'Although I expected some very absurd and impertinent proposal, yet my imagination had never reached any thing so ridiculous as this Mr. Vellum; for I had had his history from himself some time before. He had been taken by her father out of a parish-school, because he understood writing and accounts, to keep his books for him. Upon his young mistress's marriage, he was advanced to be a clerk in her husband's office; and here, having scraped up a little money, he made some successful ventures in trade, and had acquired about two thousand pounds. After Sir John's death, my lady made him her steward, with a salary of fifty pounds a year; and he was in this honourable and lucrative post, when she proposed him as a husband for me.

'My surprise was succeeded by a strong inclination to laugh, which, indeed, I took no pains to suppress;

and pray Madam, ſaid I, has this grave perſonage expreſſed any good liking to me?

'I hope you are not jeſting, ſaid ſhe.—Why, did you expect me to be ſerious, replied I, upon ſuch a propoſal?

'Such a propoſal, Miſs! repeated lady Manning, colouring: if my daughter was in your circumſtances, I would not be ſorry ſuch a propoſal was made to her. Very likely, Madam, returned I, and it might be more proper than to Mr. Courteney's daughter, and the niece of the earl of——.

'This may look like vanity, my dear Miſs Woodby; but I confeſs I was exceſſively ſhocked at her levelling me with her daughter, when riches were out of the queſtion; for I was contented to allow her all the ſuperiority ſhe could derive from them. Lady Manning made me a ſmarter anſwer, and delivered with more calmneſs than I expected from her.

'If the earl of——, ſaid ſhe, behaved more like an uncle to you, Miſs, it would be oftener remembered that you are his niece; but, as it is, I do not know whether it may not be an advantage to you, to have it forgot; for there are very few gentlemen of ſmall fortunes who would chooſe an indigent woman of quality for a wife.

'I hope, however, Madam, ſaid I, that none but a gentleman will preſume to offer himſelf to me; and I ſhall take care not to juſtify my uncle's neglect, by encouraging any improper addreſs.—You are very much in the right, Miſs, ſaid lady Manning, one unfortunate marriage in a family is enough.

''Tis well, Madam, replied I, burſting into tears, you mean my father's, no doubt; but it was no otherwiſe unfortunate than that it had not the ſanction of my grand-father's conſent; my mother's excellencies juſtified his choice; and ſhe might have had a fortune too, though not equal to what he might have expected, if it had not been truſted in the hands of a villain, who broke to leave his own children fortunes, as many other villains have done.

'This laſt hint threw lady Manning into ſome confuſion; for it was ſuſpected that her grand-father, who

was a cornfactor, had done the like: and, whether it was that ſhe was afraid of my ſpeaking ſtill plainer, or that ſhe was really concerned for having given me ſuch juſt reaſon to complain of her, ſhe thought fit to beg my pardon for what was paſt, and aſſured me, that whatever I might think of her, ſhe was unalterably my friend.

'In my firſt emotions of reſentment, I had reſolved to write to Mr. Bale, and acquaint him with the treatment I had met with, which I knew would bring him immediately to my relief: but I conſidered that my leaving lady Manning in diſguſt might have diſagreeable conſequences; for ſhe would not fail to repreſent every thing in ſuch a manner as to make me appear in the wrong, and the world ſeldom eſpouſes the part of the oppreſſed, becauſe they who oppreſs have that on their ſide which is ſure to exculpate them, and that is riches: beſides, the ſummer was now almoſt paſt, and ſhe talked of going ſoon to London, where I could take an opportunity of leaving her without any noiſe, and of putting myſelf immediately under my guardian's protection; but I was delivered from this diſagreeable ſituation ſooner than I expected, and by means which I had then no reaſon to hope for.

'Lady Manning was deſirous of ſpending a few weeks at Bath, before ſhe returned to London. A lady happened to be there at that time, who, I afterwards learned, was my great aunt by my father's ſide, and had followed the example of every branch of his family, in taking no notice of him after his marriage.

'This lady, lady Manning became acquainted with; and not knowing the relation in which ſhe ſtood to me, ſhe began one day to exclaim againſt the pride and folly of people in low circumſtances, who expect to be conſidered on account of their birth, producing me as an inſtance, and relating how I had refuſed an honeſt man whom ſhe had propoſed to me for a huſband, becauſe he was not a gentleman, repeating my own words with a ſneer; and therefore—*Not a proper match for Mr. Courteney's daughter.*

'This being the firſt time ſhe had named me, lady

Meadows (for it was her) cried out in some astonishment, what, madam, is that pretty young lady (so she was pleased to say) that I saw with you once in the rooms, Mr. Courteney's daughter?

'Lady Manning answering in the affirmative—good heaven! said lady Meadows, and have I lived to hear one of my family spoken of with such contempt?

'One of your family, madam! interrupted lady Manning, surprised.

'Yes, said lady Meadows, one of my family, who has done you too much honour to accept of an obligation from you; how could you presume to propose your scoundrel steward for a husband to my cousin? but I will take her out of your hands immediately; you shall be paid for her board; my nephew's daughter shall not lie under an obligation to any upstart cit.

'It is not to be doubted that lady Manning replied with great bitterness; but lady Meadows, from whom I afterwards had these particulars, was in too much emotion to listen to her. She immediately quitted the walk, for they were on the Parade; and getting into her chariot, told lady Manning, that she was going to her lodgings to fetch me away.

'Thus, my dear Miss Woodby, did I recover a relation, a friend, a benefactress, in a woman, who for many years, had had no intercourse with my father, and disclaimed him, as the rest of his relations had done, on account of his marriage: she whose resentment could not be softened by time; whose compassion could not be awakened by distress; she who had silenced the pleadings of nature, yet listened to the voice of pride; and from a sense of the affront that had been offered her family, in the husband proposed to me, she did all that a better motive could have suggested her to do.

'You may imagine I was greatly surprised, when a servant informed me, that lay Meadows was at the door in her chariot, and desired I would come to her. I had often heard my father mention this aunt of his, from whom, before his marriage, he had great expectations. I went down stairs in much confusion of mind, not know-

ing what this summons could mean, yet presaging some good; and as soon as I appeared, lady Meadows let down the glass, and desired me to come into the chariot. Her footman instantly opening the door, I got in, and placed myself by her, expecting when she would speak, and anxiously longing for an explanation.

'Lady Meadows gazed at me in silence, during some moments; then taking my hand, *My* dear, said she in a tender accent, you are very like your father. Poor Ned! added she with some emotion, he was not kindly used.—The tears streamed from my eyes at this mention of my father. I observed lady Meadows was greatly affected. Oh nature! thought I, why were thy tender feelings suppressed so long? Don't weep, my dear, said she, I will be both father and mother to you.

'Had I been in another place, I should have thrown myself at her feet, to express my gratitude for this affectionate promise. I could not speak at that moment; I took her hand, kissed it, and wet it with my tears. She kindly wiped my eyes with her own handkerchief; then looking again in my face, as if with pleasure, you are like your mother too, I suppose, said she: I never saw her, but I have heard that she was very handsome.

'This obliging manner of mentioning my mother, which I so little expected from her, quite subdued me. My dear, said she, what is past cannot be helped; you are my daughter now; you shall be no longer obliged to lady Manning.—That woman, pursued she, rising in her temper as she spoke, has herself told me the insolence of her treatment of you: she then gave me an account of what had passed upon the Parade, as I have already related to you.

'Lady Manning thought to have injured me in your opinion, said I, and she has made me happy, by awakening your tenderness for me: I now forgive her for all her insults.

'But I never will forgive her, interrupted lady Meadows.—As soon as we come to my lodgings, you shall send for your cloaths, and never more enter her doors.

'I was very unwilling to part with lady Manning in

this manner, and preſſed my aunt to allow me to go and take leave of her civilly; but ſhe poſitively refuſed; and I found ſhe could not endure the leaſt contradiction, which is indeed one of her foibles. I therefore contented myſelf with writing to her, and acquainted her with lady Meadows's reſolution in my favour: I made the beſt apology I could for leaving her ſo ſuddenly, and expreſſed ſome concern at the miſunderſtanding there was between lady Meadows and her, which made it impoſſible for me to wait on her.

'Politeneſs, my dear, is ſometimes a great tax upon ſincerity. Lady Manning had certainly treated me very ill, and, in ſtrict juſtice, I was not obliged to ſhew any reſpect to a woman who had violated all the laws of hoſpitality with regard to me; but cuſtom decides arbitrarily in theſe caſes; and perſons in a certain condition of life, make a ſcience of hating one another with all the good breeding and complaiſance imaginable.

'Lady Manning, according to this rule, returned a civil anſwer to my letter, wiſhed me all happineſs, and wherever ſhe went, let looſe all the aſperity of her tongue againſt me. One calumny propagated by her hurt me more than all the reſt: ſhe confidently reported that I had ſacrificed my conſcience to my intereſt; and that upon my aunt's promiſing to ſettle her whole fortune upon me at her death, I had turned Roman catholic: for lady Meadows had been perverted to that religion by her huſband, and, like all proſelytes, was extremely bigotted to her new principles.

'I thought it became me to diſcountenance this report as much as poſſible; therefore I was more regular than ever in my attendance at church: and although my aunt, after we came to London, would often have engaged me to go to maſs with her, intending no doubt to work me to her purpoſe by degrees; yet I conſtantly and ſteadily refuſed to gratify her in this particular, though in every other I ſtudied to oblige her as much as poſſible. She would often engage me in arguments upon the ſubject of religion, which I generally ſtrove to evade; and when I found that would not do, I defended myſelf with great

courage, and with ſo much ſucceſs, that ſhe would tell me with an air, half ſmiling, half angry, that I was too hard for her, and that ſhe would conſign me over to her chaplain.

'This chaplain, whoſe name is Danvers, is a prieſt of the order of the Jeſuits: he had been recommended to lady Meadows by her late huſband, whoſe memory ſhe adored; and this powerful intereſt, joined to the jeſuit's inſinuating manners, acquired him ſo great credit with lady Meadows, that ſhe governed herſelf wholly by his advice; and that the great work of her ſalvation might be perfected, and her every word and action be under his direction, he lived in the houſe with her, where he ruled in a moſt arbitrary manner; his abſolute empire over the conſcience of my lady, rendering his dominion over all that had any dependence on her as uncontroled as he could deſire.'

Here Henrietta ſtopped, obſerving her friend to look at her watch, which produced an exclamation that the reader will find in the following chapter.

CHAP. III.

Which introduces a Jeſuit to the Acquaintance of the Reader.

'OH! my dear' cried Miſs Woodby, 'I am in deſpair to find it is ſo late, I muſt leave you now; but I am ſo impatient to hear the reſt of your ſtory, that if you will give me leave, I will breakfaſt with you to-morrow, and as ſoon as my eager curioſity is ſatisfied, we will go together to Mrs. Egret's.'

'She then deſired a chair might be ſent for; and in the mean time, ſaid ſhe, we will ſtep into the ſhop, I will make a little purchaſe on purpoſe to ſee your landlady, whom you ſeem to diſlike ſo much.'

'Indeed I do not like her,' replied Henrietta, 'and yet ſhe is mighty civil.' 'Well,' ſaid Miſs Woodby, tripping down ſtairs, 'I'll give you my opinion of her when I have ſtudied her a little.'

Miſs Courteney was following her into the ſhop, when perceiving the young gentleman, who was there the day before, in diſcourſe with Mrs. Eccles, ſhe pulled Miſs

Woodby by the sleeve, whispering, 'Don't go in now, there is somebody with her.' 'Indeed, but I will,' replied Miss Woodby, who saw the glimpse of a laced coat, for which she had always a violent passion, 'and so shall you likewise.'

Saying this, she pulled Miss Courteney in, and, swimming up to Mrs. Eccles, bid her with a lively air show her some ribbons and blond laces.

The young gentleman, as soon as the ladies appeared, made them a profound bow; and, fixing his eyes on Henrietta's face, seemed to contemplate it with astonishment and delight.

Mean time Miss Woodby was playing over a thousand fantastic airs, and uttering as many pretty absurdities, which she had heard admired coming from the mouths of beauties, without reflecting that she herself was no beauty.—Mrs. Eccles perceived her foible immediately, and took occasion, when she was showing her some new-fashioned caps, to tell her, that such a one would suit the air of her face; that this coloured ribbon was most proper to shew the lustre of her eyes; observed that she had wonderful fine hair, and begged to know who cut it.

Henrietta, a little in pain for her friend, to whom personal compliments were by no means proper, endeavoured to relieve the confusion she supposed she was under, by diverting her attention to something else, and asked her opinion of some Dresden work that was lying before them. But Miss Woodby had no leisure to answer her; for the gentleman, conceiving that it was easier to introduce some conversation to her than to Miss Courteney, whose mingled modesty and dignity struck him with awe, addressed a trifling question to Miss Woodby, which she answered with such an affected sprightliness, as encouraged him to talk to her with the familiarity of an old acquaintance.

Miss Woodby was excessively delighted with his address to her, and played off all the artillery of eyes, air, and wit upon him.—Happy was it for the young gentle-

man, who courageously bore all her attacks, that this fire was given from two little grey eyes, over which her forehead hung like a precipice; and that this form, which was thrown into a thousand different attitudes to strike him, was so distorted by nature, as to leave little more for affectation to do.

The chair had been waiting half an hour without Miss Woodby's perceiving it, when Henrietta, who was not at all pleased with the figure her friend made, told her, smiling, 'that she would not let her stay any longer, for fear she should by that means be disappointed of her company at breakfast the next day.'

'I vow, my dear, you are in the right,' cried Miss Woodby, 'to send me away; for my aunt is waiting supper for me—I am a giddy creature.'—She then desired Mrs. Eccles to put up the things she had bought; for, in the gaiety of her heart, she had bought a great many. Mrs. Eccles obeyed, telling her she hoped she should have the pleasure of serving so agreeable a lady again.

The gentleman would hand her into her chair, which Miss Woodby accepted with a very gallant air, after she had assured Miss Courteney aloud, that she would be with her in the morning, and told her in a whisper that her landlady was a very pretty behaved woman.

Henrietta went up to her chamber directly, to the great disappointment of the young gentleman, who, finding there was no probability of seeing her again that night, went away disburthened of a heart which he had left with the charming stranger.

She was now summoned to supper by Mrs. Eccles, who was full of praises of the young lady her visiter. 'This has been a lucky day to me, said she, for I have let my first floor at a very good price, considering the season of the year.' 'I am glad of it,' said the young lady. 'That is very obliging of you, my dear Miss,' said Mrs. Eccles, 'and you may still have the use of the dining-room when you have company; for my lord will be seldom at home in the day; these lodgings are only to sleep in. But how do you like him? Is he not a

mighty agreeable man? Dear soul! not a bit of pride in him——'

'Do you mean the gentleman I saw in the shop?' said Miss Courteney. 'Yes,' returned Mrs. Eccles, 'he is a lord, I assure you.' 'Well,' said Miss Courteney, 'I am glad you are not to lose one lodger without getting another, for I must leave you to-morrow.' 'How!' replied Mrs. Eccles, with an altered countenance, 'I hope you are only in jest.' 'Upon my word I am in earnest,' said Miss Courteney. 'I am sorry for it, Madam,' resumed she, 'but this is very short notice.'

Henrietta was a little surprised at the peevishness with which she spoke these last words, so different from her usual complaisance: but she would not seem to take notice of it, and only told her, that it was not her design to stay more than a few days at this end of the town, having affairs to transact in the city, which would oblige her for her own convenience to take lodgings there.

Mrs. Eccles appeared satisfied with this answer, though a cloud hung upon her brow during the whole time they were at supper, which Miss Courteney shortened as much as possible, and retired to her chamber, with new prejudices against her landlady, that made her rejoice in the prospect of getting away the next day.

Miss Woodby came according to her promise to breakfast, in a world of spirits, and had scarce taken a seat, when she asked after the charming fellow who entertained her so agreeably in the shop.

Henrietta told her, she saw no more of him; for the moment you was gone, said she, I went up stairs; but really, my dear, I wonder you seemed so pleased with his conversation, methought it was very silly and trifling.'

'Oh!' exclaimed Miss Woodby, 'there is an inexpressible charm in the trifling chat of a pretty sensible fellow, when we know he submits to it only to please us women.' 'Truly,' said Miss Courteney, 'your sex is not obliged to you for that compliment. Must a man then talk nonsense to be acceptable to us.' 'Lord, how

grave you are! my dear,' said Miss Woodby—'why, don't you know that I am the veriest coquet in nature, and take an infinite pleasure in making a wise man look and talk like a fool.'

'A coquet, my dear!' interrupted Henrietta, surprised, 'no, surely.' 'Indeed but I am,' replied Miss Woodby; 'and I verily think I should not be in the least concerned to see a hundred men dying of love for me.' 'Indeed!' said Miss Courteney. 'Yes, indeed,' repeated the other; 'but why that stare of astonishment? are these notions so new to you?' 'Why, no—' hesitated Miss Courteney (whose astonishment arose from the contemplation of the figure which uttered all this extravagance) 'I have somewhere met in my course of reading with such fantastical notions, but I cannot say that I ever thought I should hear them avowed by a young lady of your good sense.' 'Oh! your servant for that compliment,' returned Miss Woodby, bowing; 'but on the article of vanity we are all fools. —But come, my dear, make your tea, and then resume your story; for I die with impatience to hear it.'

'I wish you would excuse me,' said Henrietta, 'till I am got to Mrs. Egret's, for I shall not be easy till I am out of this house.' 'Why have you such a dislike to this house?' said Miss Woodby, 'I protest I think your landlady a mighty civil, obliging woman.' 'Well, I don't like her,' replied Henrietta, 'she has let her first floor all on a sudden to the gentleman we saw in the shop.' 'And how does that affect you?' interrupted Miss Woodby.'

Henrietta blushed at this question; she was not willing to own that she thought there was some design in his coming, and expected her friend would have made that inference herself; but finding she did not, she endeavoured to divert her attention from the hint she had dropped, by saying she had set her heart upon going to Mrs. Egret's, and had told Mrs. Eccles that she was to leave her to-day.

'That was very imprudently done of you,' said Miss Woodby, 'before you knew whether Mrs. Egret could accommodate you with lodgings; but own the truth

now,' pursued she, 'did you not put yourself into a flutter upon hearing the gentleman had taken lodgings here?'

'Why, I cannot help saying I was startled at it,' replied Henrietta, 'and the more when I heard he was a man of quality; for surely these lodgings are much too mean for a person of that rank.'

'Is he a man of quality? exclaimed Miss Woodby—'Oh! the dear creature—I protest I am quite in love with him now; I doat on a man of quality.—And pray why should his coming fright you away.—Ah! my dear,' said she, smiling archly, 'had I not reason for saying a moment ago, that on the article of vanity we are all fools? Now are you ready to imagine here is a plot between this young nobleman and Mrs. Eccles, against your fair self. Poor lady,' pursued she, laughing, this presumptuous knight will certainly carry you away.'

'You are in a gay humour to-day,' said Miss Courteney, blushing, 'but raillery a-part, it imports me greatly not to be known: this lord, as Mrs. Eccles says he is, will no doubt have a great many persons coming after him; I may be seen and discovered; and, if you knew what I have to dread in that case, I am sure you would think it reasonable for me to be anxious to get out of this house.'

'You will be in more danger of a discovery at Mrs. Egret's,' said Miss Woodby; 'her house is much larger than this, and she is very seldom without people of fashion in it.' 'But I can keep in my chamber,' said Henrietta. 'And what hinders you from doing so here,' said Miss Woodby—'Ah! it is as I suspected; you are certainly apprehensive of being conveyed to some island in an immense lake.'

'But my dear Miss Woodby,' said Henrietta, laughing, 'why, have you changed your mind about my going to Mrs. Egret's?' 'I have not changed my mind,' replied Miss Woodby; 'I am ready to do what I promised, but it is my opinion that if Mrs. Egret cannot

furnish you with a lodging; you will be very safe here, and I will be with you as often as I can.' 'Ah, my dear,' said Miss Courteney, mimicking the tone she had used to her; 'but come, write a line to Mrs. Egret to know if she has a single room to spare, and I shall be satisfied.'

Miss Woodby immediately complied with her request, and a porter was dispatched to St. James's-street, who soon returned with a billet from Mrs. Egret to Miss Woodby, expressing her concern that she could not accommodate her friend.

'Well,' said Henrietta, when she heard this, 'I find I must be contented to stay here a few days longer; but remember I claim your promise to be with me as often as you can.' 'That you may depend upon,' said Miss Woodby; 'and now I claim your's to finish your history, I am impatient to hear how you came off with this doughty chaplain.'

CHAP. IV.

In which our Heroine engages herself in a very unequal Contest.

'I Must confess,' said Miss Courteney, resuming her narrative, 'that I had no inclination to engage in a religious dispute with a man whose learning and abilities gave him so many advantages over me; therefore, whenever he gave the conversation that turn, I generally took refuge in silence, not being willing to hurt a cause I had so much at heart, by defending it weakly.

'However, I was often drawn in to answer by some apparent absurdity advanced by him, which it seemed mighty easy to refute. On these occasions Mr. Danvers would listen to me with wonderful attention, observe the most minute exactness in his reply, as if what I had urged had indeed great force: nay, he would sometimes seem a little prest by my arguments; pause for a few moments, as if he found it necessary to collect all his strength against so potent an adversary; and, after a well-turned compliment on my understanding, he would resume the argument, in which he never failed to puzzle, though he could not convince me; but always concluded with a de-

claration that I was too hard for him, and it was well he had the beſt ſide of the argument, for nothing but truth could ſtand againſt ſuch ſubtilty of reaſoning.

'These praiſes always left me in a very good diſpoſition to renew the ſubject whenever an opportunity offered. I began to be extremely fond of diſputing with the chaplain; and, inſtead of ſhunning it, as I uſed to do, I even invited his oppoſition.

'I have heard it obſerved, that vanity cheats many a woman out of her honour, I am ſure it was well nigh cheating me out of my religion; for this jeſuit, by his inſidious praiſes, had given me ſuch a confidence in my talent of reaſoning, that I began to believe if he did not make a proſelyte of me, I ſhould certainly make one of him; and, in my eager purſuit of victory, I ſometimes engaged myſelf beyond my ſtrength, and received ſuch checks, that if my faith was not overthrown, yet it was ſtrangely ſtaggered: but ſome diſguſt which I took to the manners of the chaplain preſerved me from the poiſon of his doctrine, and made me loſe all my reliſh for arguing with him.

'My aunt, who was certainly very deſirous of my converſion, was much pleaſed with her chaplain's zeal to forward ſo great a work; and that ſhe might give no interruption to our diſcourſe, ſhe would often leave us alone for ſeveral hours together.

'At ſuch times, the jeſuit would be very laviſh of his compliments and praiſes; of which my perſon would even come in for a ſhare—He would gaze on my face till he loſt the chain of his diſcourſe, and, by his inattention to what he was ſaying, gave me many advantages over him; and often, while he was purſuing his argument with great warmth, he would lay his hand on mine, hold it for ſeveral minutes together, and preſs it ſo violently, that I could hardly help crying out.

'All this however would not have ſtartled me; but one day, taking occaſion upon ſomething I had ſaid to break into an exclamation of ſurpriſe, at my prodigious underſtanding, he kiſſed my hand in a kind of rapture; and

having once taken this liberty, he repeated it ſeveral times, to my great confuſion and ſurpriſe.

'Theſe are ſuſpicions, my dear, which, againſt perſons of a certain character, one dare not even avow to one's ſelf. I was ſhocked, yet would not venture to examine why; I could never endure to be alone with him, yet never aſked myſelf the reaſon; my eyes, as it were, mechanically avoided his; his civilities were odious to me. If he enquired after my health, I anſwered him coldly, without knowing I did ſo; and when he launched into any of his uſual praiſes, I was downright rude to him, yet ſcarce perceived it myſelf.

'I now ſo carefully ſhunned being alone with him, that notwithſtanding he ſought opportunities of engaging me in private, which heightened my diſguſt, yet he never could find any. This conduct, if he had any guilt in his heart, muſt certainly give him cauſe to think I had detected it; and indeed I ſoon found, by my aunt's altered behaviour, that he was endeavouring to undermine me in her affection.

'The little peeviſhneſs I obſerved in her towards me, I imputed at firſt to her chagrin, at my having diſappointed her wiſhes in not becoming a convert to that religion ſhe profeſſed; but I ſoon found that ſhe had been made to conceive ſtrange notions of me. She objected to the gaiety of my diſpoſition; ſhe did not like that crowd of lovers, as ſhe phraſed it, that followed me, and were encouraged by my coquet airs, and the pleaſure I ſhewed in being admired.

'It is certain, that the report of the fortune my aunt deſigned for me, procured me addreſſes from ſeveral men, whom as ſhe did not approve, ſo neither did I encourage; having, in reality, none of that ſort of vanity which is gratified by a great many pretenders of this kind, nor did I feel the leaſt partiality to any one of them; ſo that I told her it would give me no uneaſineſs if ſhe forbid their viſits for the future, which, ſince I found they were diſagreeable to her, I would have done myſelf, if I had thought it became me to take that liberty in her houſe. This declaration would not ſatisfy my

aunt: ſhe had further views; I muſt marry, and ſhe muſt chooſe a huſband for me, without leaving me in an affair that ſo nearly concerned my happineſs, even a negative voice.

'I have no doubt but that the perſon ſhe pitched upon was recommended to her by the chaplain; he was a Roman catholic baronet, had a good eſtate, was not much above ſixty years of age, his perſon juſt not horrible, and he was not quite a fool. This was the man whom my aunt propoſed to me, or rather commanded me to accept; for he had modeſty enough not to try to engage my affections, till he had ſecured her conſent, and was admitted in form to make his addreſſes to me.

'My aunt indeed allowed that there was ſome diſproportion in our years; but then he had a good eſtate, and I was wholly dependent upon her; his perſon, ſhe acknowledged, was not very amiable, but he was a baronet, and could give me a title; to be ſure, ſhe ſaid, he was not a man of bright parts, but he would make a good ſettlement on me; and concluded with aſſuring me, that my chearful conſent would greatly endear me to her, which I ſhould find by the diſpoſition ſhe would make in her will.

'My aunt, having thus anticipated every objection I could make, and, in her opinion, fully anſwered them all, I thought it would be to no purpoſe to diſpute with her on points already decided; I therefore contented myſelf with declaring, that I could not like Sir Iſaac Darby (for that was his name); that I ſhould be miſerable, if I married him; that I was extremely happy in my preſent ſituation, and had no wiſh to change it.

'Lady Meadows, I perceived, was a little offended at this ſo poſitive a declaration; but I had nothing for it but ſteadineſs. I expected, ſaid ſhe, more compliance from that ſweetneſs I have been fond of ſuppoſing in your temper, and from your good ſenſe, a greater attention to your own intereſt. I aſſured her, that it was and ever ſhould be my ſincereſt endeavour to avoid offending her; that I would admit no offer but ſuch as ſhe ſhould approve; and that I would guard my heart

against any preference which was not authorised by her; more than this I told her was not in my power to promise, for no consideration of interest could prevail upon me to give my hand to a man, whom it was impossible for me either to love or esteem.

'Finding she listened to me patiently, I urged every argument my imagination could furnish me with, to prove to her that such an engagement, entered into upon pecuniary motives only, could not be happy, and might be very miserable. I begged she would not think of disposing of me in marriage, till I seemed less satisfied with my present happy lot; and that, by giving me no superior duties in domestic life to fulfil, she might entitle herself to all my undivided cares, affection and assiduity.

'My aunt seemed affected with what I had said: she told me she had no intention of forcing my inclination; that, loving me so well as she did, it was natural for her to wish to see me settled; that Sir Isaac Darby was a very advantageous offer; she recommended to me to consider well what I refused, and to conquer my unreasonable dislike of him, if possible.

'If it were possible, Madam, replied I, your command would make me attempt it, but——No more buts now, Henrietta, interrupted my aunt—Sir Isaac dines here to-day; remember I expect you will treat him civilly at least, since he has so great a regard for you.

'I smiled, courtesied, and went out of the room where this long conversation had been held; for I heard the chaplain's step in my aunt's dressing room; and this being the hour when he generally joined us, I chose to avoid seeing him then, for fear he should prevail upon her to exact something more than civility from me to the odious wretch, who had thus bartered for me without my consent.

'I did not appear in the dining-room till dinner was ready to be served; my antiquated lover approached with a janty air, and a sliding bow; and O! don't you pity me, my dear, kissed my hand, as he led me to my seat. Nothing but the respect I owed my aunt could have hindered me from laughing, at this ridiculous dis-

play of gallantry in the old man; for age has no claim to our reverence, if not accompanied by those qualities from whence it derives its worth. Wisdom, gravity, experience, the triumph of reason over passions, prejudice, and folly: all these we expect to find in fullness of years, and these make its wrinkles not only respectable but even lovely.

'In Sir Isaac Darby, age was contemptible as well as unlovely; he wanted to be young, in spite of time; he talked and laughed aloud; he strutted about the room; he adjusted his bag, for he was drest up to five and twenty; he hummed a tune: I sat staring with astonishment at him. When we were placed at table, I found myself opposite to him; and observing that he chewed his meat with great difficulty, for want of teeth, I was resolved to mortify him, by letting him perceive that I observed it, looking at him several times with a kind of sensibility for this so unavoidable a misfortune.

'From what had passed between my aunt and I in the morning, I had no reason to imagine that Sir Isaac would be treated as a declared and authorised lover; but some time after dinner was over, Mr. Danvers withdrew, and my aunt, upon some trifling pretence, following him, I was left alone with the old baronet. I would instantly have quitted the room; but, remembering that my aunt had required civility of me at least, I resolved not to affront him, by leaving him to himself; and since I was obliged to stay, I would draw some amusement from the ridiculous scene before me.

'I know not whether it was from any particular archness in my looks just then (for I had composed my countenance to a kind of forced gravity) or whether the old man was at a loss in what manner he should form his address; but it is certain, that all his confidence seemed now, for the first time, to forsake him, and he sat silent during several minutes, stealing a glance at me every now and then; while I, with a formal air, played my fan, and increased his confusion by my silence. At length he quitted his own chair for that on which my aunt had sat in, and which was next me; and drawing

it ftill nearer to me, he made a motion to take my hand, which I withdrew as haftily as if a fnake had touched it.

'This action a little difconcerted him; but taking courage again, after a preluding hem, he began, Charming Mifs Courteney, I don't doubt but lady Meadows has informed you of the violence of my——Here an unlucky cough interrupted his fpeech, and held him fo long, that he grew black in the face; his endeavours to fupprefs it having, as I believe, almoft choaked him. I rofe up in a feeming fright, as if I had defigned to call for affiftance; but finding his cough had ceafed, I fat down again at a greater diftauce than before.

'I fancy the town air does not agree with you, Sir, faid I, it is certainly very bad for afthmatical diforders.

'Oh, Madam! faid he, this is no afthma. I got a flight cold the other night at Spring-Gardens; for we ftaid very late, and the ground was damp: but I came off better than any of my companions, two or three of whom are ftill laid up with colds. But tell me, dear Mifs Courteney, did you receive favourably the declaration your aunt made in my name? May I hope, or am I doomed to defpair? whined out the fuperannuated enamorato, with an hideous ogle, which he defigned for a languifh.

'Oh, good Sir! replied I, exceffively fhocked at his folly, thefe Arcadian ftrains do not become your wifdom and gravity. My aunt did mention your propofals to me, but I cannot accept them; I have no inclination to change my condition.

'How admirably this pretty ferioufnefs fits on thofe fweet features! faid the wretch, looking confidently at me, without being in the leaft mortified with my rebuke. But my dear Mifs Courteney, you muft change your mind—indeed you muft—and your condition too, my fair one.

'Perhaps I may, Sir, faid I.

'Oh, that charming perhaps! faid he, it reftores me to life.

'Was there ever any thing fo provoking, my dear? I proteft

protest I could hardly help abusing the ridiculous old man.

'I really think, Sir, said I, looking at him with infinite contempt, that my seriousness would become your age, as well as my youth; but, pursued I, rising, to put an end to all your hopes, be pleased to know, that I am determined never to give my hand till I can give my heart with it; for I have no notion of being perjured at the altar, and of vowing to love, honour, and obey, when it is impossible for me to do either.

'I went out of the room when I had said these words, leaving the baronet to mumble the ends of his fingers with his gums; for he affected to bite his nails, as some persons who really have teeth, do, when they are angry.

'I met my aunt as I was going to my own chamber: What, Henrietta! said she, have you left Sir Isaac alone? —I suppose you have treated him rudely; but come, you must return with me—I will, if you insist upon it, Madam, said I, but I had much rather be excused—Indeed! said my aunt, looking a little angrily on me, and with that grave face too, but I shall not insist upon it, Miss, and so you may go up to your own room if you please.

'Although I was very glad to be at liberty to retire, yet my aunt's permission was given in such a manner that I saw she was offended with me for desiring it. I had experienced the obstinacy of her temper on several occasions; and I was convinced that if she set her heart upon marrying me to the baronet, she would use her utmost endeavours to carry her point, and the loss of her favour might probably be the consequence of her disappointment.'

CHAP. V.

Containing an Account of some Difficulties our Heroine was involved in, arising from an old exploded Notion, that Interest ought not to be the sole Consideration in Marriage.

'FULL of these melancholy reflections, I resolved to write to Mr. Bale, acquaint him with what had passed, and intreat his advice in the uneasy and perplexed state of my mind. Not that I had the least intention

of being governed by it, if he recommended to me compliance with my aunt's commands in favour of the baronet; but this I was well aſſured, from his good ſenſe and natural rectitude of mind, he would not do, ſince it could never be ſuppoſed that ſuch a man could be my choice; but I was willing to ſtand clear in his opinion, and pay him that deference, that was due to the quality of guardian which he had ſo kindly aſſumed.

'I had been writing near three hours, for I had given him a circumſtantial detail of every thing that had paſſed with regard to the baronet, whoſe character I treated with great contempt; but what was worſe, my aunt herſelf did not eſcape ſome ſatirical ſtrokes of my pen for her ready concurrence with the old man's propoſals; and although I mentioned her (as it was my duty) with all imaginable love and reſpect, yet I could not help humourouſly raillying upon ſome of her notions, which were really odd enough, and I placed them in the moſt glaring light.

'The prodigious length of my letter firſt gave me notice that I had been a long time thus employed; and looking at my watch, I found it was paſt our uſual hour for tea, and wondered that I had not been ſummoned down ſtairs. I therefore made haſte to conclude my letter, that I might ſend it to the poſt, when my aunt unfortunately entered the room. I ſtarted up from my chair when I ſaw her; and, haſtily cruſhing the letter all in my hand, I put it into my pocket, not without betraying ſome ſigns of confuſion.

'So, Henrietta, ſaid my aunt, have I caught you? Caught me! Madam, ſaid I, conſidering whether ſhe might not have been looking over my ſhoulder while I was writing ſo ſaucily about her; for guilt, like love, makes every thing ſeem poſſible that we fear. Yes, ſaid ſhe, have you not been writing? Nay, don't deny it, purſued ſhe (for I heſitated and knew not what to ſay, leſt ſhe ſhould deſire to ſee my letter) it is no wonder that poor Sir Iſaac Darby was rejected with ſo much ſcorn, when there is a favoured lover with whom you correſpond privately.

'Bleſs me, Madam, cried I, who has told you ſo? I correſpond privately with a favoured lover!—This is ſome cruel calumny invented by an enemy to deprive me of your good opinion. Well, ſaid my aunt, ſhew me the letter you conveyed ſo haſtily into your pocket upon my appearance, and then I ſhall know what to think.

'You never, Madam, replied I, uſed to deſire to ſee my letters; nor would you now, but in conſequence of ſome ſuſpicion very unfavourable to me. That ſuſpicion, interrupted my aunt, whatever it is, will be greatly ſtrengthened by your refuſing to ſhew me what you have been writing.

'Surely, Madam, replied I, that is not juſt, I may have been writing to Mr. Bale, or to my brother. To your brother, ſaid my aunt, I am certain you was not writing, becauſe you have not heard from him for ſeveral months, and don't know how to direct to him (which indeed was but too true). It is poſſible that you were writing to Mr. Bale; but why refuſe to ſhew me your letter? you can have no tranſactions with him that I ought not to be acquainted with: but I am perſuaded that letter was not deſigned for Mr. Bale; and there needs no more to convince me that you are carrying on a private, and therefore an improper correſpondence, than your thus obſtinately refuſing to ſhew it me.

'My aunt had reaſon for what ſhe ſaid: nothing was more eaſy, if I was really innocent, than to ſhew her the letter, which would remove her ſuſpicions; but this, as I had managed that fatal letter, it was impoſſible for me to do. By not ſhewing it, I confirmed thoſe ſuſpicions ſhe had ſo unjuſtly conceived, which might indeed have diſagreeable conſequences; but by ſhewing it, I was ſure to incur her reſentment for the liberties I had taken with her.

'How did I that moment inwardly regret my vanity, which had ſuffered me to railly the faults of a perſon on whom I ſo abſolutely depended, merely to diſplay my wit. I was ſo vexd at the dilemma to which I had reduced myſelf, that I burſt into tears.

'Oh! I see how it is, said my aunt, keep your letter, Henrietta, I am convinced sufficiently. She hurried out of my chamber at these words. Shocked to the soul at having thus incurred the imputation of entertaining a secret lover, I went after her, resolving in that first emotion to shew her the letter, and rather be thought ungrateful to her, than guilty of an imprudence so disadvantageous to my character; but she was already at the bottom of the stairs, and I had time to make new reflections which prevented my former purpose.

'I considered that since there was no foundation for her fears that I listened to a private address, I might easily find means to undeceive her, and justify myself; but if I shewed her a letter, in which she was mentioned with so great freedom, I might possibly never be able to remove those ill impressions of me which she would doubtless receive, and I should be all my life branded for ingratitude.

'I was so terrified at this thought, that I resolved to put it out of my power to expose myself to such a misfortune by destroying the fatal letter, which I did with a precipitation that left no time for second thoughts. When this was over, I expected to have found myself more calm and easy, but it was quite otherwise. I had given foundation to believe I was engaged in a love intrigue; for surely all clandestine addresses may be termed so, since there is too much mystery, contrivance, and little arts, necessary to them, not to give great pain to a delicate mind. I burst into tears at the reflection. My aunt's woman, who had a very tender regard for me, came into my chamber, and, finding me so disordered, begged to know what had happened.

'I related every thing that had passed between my aunt and I, but did not own to all the little freedoms I had taken with her in my letter: yet said enough to convince her, that I could not well show it to my aunt:

'Mrs. White, for that was her name, was very much concerned for my situation: she told me, that her lady and Mr. Danvers were in close conference. It is certainly he, said she, who has infused these suspicions into

my lady, which, by this unfortunate circumſtance of the letter, are now confirmed: ſhe gave me ſuch plain hints of the chaplain's ſelfiſh diſpoſitions and deſigns, that it ſeemed highly probable he would ſpare no artifices to leſſen my aunt's affection for me; for, ſince he had failed in making me a convert, which perhaps might have anſwered other views, he was deſirous of keeping my aunt entirely to himſelf, and ſo manage her conſcience, which he had the direction of, as that holy mother-church and he might divide her ſpoils.

'All this conſidered, my condition ſeemed ſo dangerous, that I begged Mrs. White to ſend a porter with a meſſage from me to Mr. Bale, deſiring to ſee him; for I reſolved to regulate my conduct on this occaſion wholly by his advice. She left me to do what I had deſired her; and I remained alone in my chamber till nine o'clock, at which time I was ſummoned to ſupper.

'I found only my aunt and Mr. Danvers: I was a little confuſed; for knowing what ſuſpicions I laboured under in my aunt's mind, I thought I had the air of a guilty perſon, and I felt that I bluſhed, and bluſhed the more for that reaſon.

'My aunt looked very coldly upon me; Mr. Danvers looked like one that was very much concerned that all was not well between us: my aunt ſcarce ſpoke three words during ſupper; it was not my part ſurely to talk much; and Mr. Danvers accommodated himſelf to the preſent temper of my aunt; ſo that this was a very gloomy meal.

'When the cloth was removed, I was going to withdraw, for it ſeemed as if my preſence was a reſtraint upon my aunt; but I conſidered that ſuch a ſtep being unuſual, would imply a conſciouſneſs of ſomething wrong in me, and that being innocent, it was my part to ſeek an explanation. I therefore addreſſed myſelf to my aunt, and begged ſhe would give me an opportunity of clearing myſelf, by telling me who had poiſoned her mind with ſuſpicions to my prejudice.

'The chaplain was about to leave the room upon my

entering on this ſubject. There is no neceſſity, Sir, ſaid I, for your retiring; I dare ſay the cauſe of my aunt's diſpleaſure againſt me is no ſecret to you. My aunt has been told that I receive addreſſes from ſome man in private, and that I correſpond with him; I declare this to be abſolutely falſe, and I beg to know from whom you had your information, Madam, ſaid I, again directing myſelf to her, that I may refute this calumny; I am very confident the perſon who has thus maliciouſly injured me, will not dare to maintain the falſhood to my face.

'Whether the chaplain thought this was meant for him, I know not; but although he had continued ſtanding, as if he intended to leave us to ourſelves, yet I had no ſooner uttered theſe laſt words, than he reſumed his ſeat immediately, as if he would ſhew me he was not in the leaſt affected by them; but I obſerved that he fixed his eyes upon my aunt, and expected her anſwer with ſome emotion.

'Before I comply with your condition, ſaid my aunt, do you, Henrietta, agree to mine; let me ſee that letter you wrote to day. I looked at the chaplain; I ſaw an alteration in his countenance, he was evidently more compoſed. Oh! thought I, ſighing, how great would my triumph be, if I had this letter to ſhow, and could ſhow it without fear!

'You heſitate, Henrietta, purſued my aunt, why, if that letter was not to a lover, why do you refuſe to produce it? I declare, Madam, ſaid I, upon my word and honour, that the letter was to Mr. Bale.—Well, let me ſee it, ſaid my aunt, and I ſhall be ſatisfied.—I cannot ſhow it to you, Madam, replied I, in a faultering accent (for I dreaded the inference that would be drawn from what I was going to confeſs) I have torn it. Well, ſaid my aunt, with a calmneſs that coſt her ſome pains to maintain; and why did you tear it? it was not written to be torn, that is certain.—But I will anſwer for you, niece, you tore it that I might not ſee it; and why might I not ſee it, if it was to Mr. Bale.—Again I proteſt, ſaid I, that it was to him; but I did not chuſe to let

you ſee it, it was a long letter, full of impertinences: you would have thought I was very free in my obſervations on ſome particular perſons, more free than became me perhaps—You might have been offended, and I tore it to prevent your ſeeing it.

'My aunt looked down, pauſed, and ſeemed not wholly diſſatisfied with my manner of accounting for the reluctance I ſhewed to deliver my letter to her; but before ſhe would declare herſelf, it was neceſſary ſhe ſhould conſult her oracle, and that could not be done before me. She therefore put an end to the converſation, by ringing the bell for her woman. I attended her to her chamber, at the door of which ſhe bade me good night, telling me, ſhe would talk further with me in the morning.

'I endeavoured to make Mrs. White comprehend, by a look I gave her unobſerved, that I wiſhed to ſpeak to her; and accordingly ſhe came to me, after my aunt was in bed, and delivered the anſwer the porter had brought from Mr. Bale's; he was out of town, but expected back in a week or two, was what the ſervants told him.

'Mrs. White repeated her offers of ſervice to me, but dropped ſome expreſſions that ſhewed ſhe would be glad to be aſſured that I really had no ſecret engagement which might juſtify my aunt's concern.

'Theſe doubts, hinted with great reſpect, were ſo far from being reſented by me, that I conceived the better opinion of her diſcretion, and confided abſolutely in her ſincerity. I made her quite eaſy with regard to the ſubject of her fears; and ſhe repaid this condeſcenſion with the kindeſt aſſurances of attachment to me and care of my intereſts.

'I went to bed, full of hope that I had in part removed my aunt's ſuſpicions, and relying on my innocence, I was perſuaded I ſhould ſoon reſtore myſelf to her good opinion; but innocence is not always a ſecurity to its poſſeſſor, becauſe malice attains its ends by arts, which a good mind cannot conceive, and therefore is unable to guard againſt.

'Mrs. White informed me in a whiſper, as I was going into my aunt's dreſſing room next morning, where

we always breakfasted, that her lady and the chaplain had been talking together for half an hour. I drew no favourable omen from this intelligence, nor from my aunt's looks, which were very cold and constrained.

'When breakfast was over, and Mr. Danvers had withdrawn, I expected she would enter into some conversation with me on the subject of the letter; but finding she talked of different things, I took occasion to mention it myself, and begged to know if she had any doubts still remaining in her mind.

'Surely, replied my aunt, you think I am a person that can be very easily imposed upon. Then you are resolved, Madam, said I, with some peevishness (for indeed I was horridly vexed to find her so strongly prejudiced) to believe I encourage a clandestine address, notwithstanding every appearance to the contrary.

'No, indeed, interrupted my aunt, I am not so unreasonable, Miss; it is because there are very strong appearances against you, that I am forced to believe what you would not have me—that letter, Henrietta—but no more on this subject at present, I am going to my house near Windsor-forest to-morrow; we shall there have leisure enough to talk over this affair, and there I shall open my mind freely to you. I courtified and was silent.

'My aunt took me with her to pay some morning visits, and seemed to be in very good humour; but her words, that she would open her mind freely to me at Windsor, gave me a great deal of anxiety. I did not doubt but I was to be prest again on the subject of Sir Isaac Darby, and I was prepared for an obstinate resistance; but I was apprehensive that this resistance to my aunt's will, meeting with the unaccountable suspicions she had entertained, would infallibly ruin me with her. O my brother! thought I, why are you not here to countenance and protect me; or why have you so long neglected me, as to leave me in suspence whether I have a brother or not!

'This thought, and several others no less painful, spread an air of pensiveness and melancholy on my countenance, which my aunt, as I perceived, by some hints

that dropped from her, interpreted to my disadvantage. In short, my dear, she imputed my pensiveness to the concern I was under at leaving town, as I could not expect to have many opportunities of seeing at Windsor this lover that had possession of my heart.

'You cannot imagine, Miss Woodby, how much I suffered in being obliged to restrain my indignation at being thus treated; to have a phantom of a lover conjured up to teaze me with, and to combat suspicions which had not the least foundation, but in prejudice and caprice, against which plain truth and reason were very unequal arms: for how should reason remove what would never have been admitted, if reason had not been first set aside? Nothing was ever more improbable than that I should have a secret lover: I never went any where without my aunt; her visiters were mine; I could see no body without her knowledge: how was this engagement formed? But her chaplain had doubtless assured her, that I had a secret engagement, and she piously believed him, in contradiction to her own judgment: this was one of those cases that required an implicit faith; and in matters of faith, you know, Roman catholics are not permitted to exercise their reason.

'We set out next morning for Windsor, the chaplain and my aunt's woman being in the coach, the conversation was wholly upon indifferent things After dinner was over, my aunt took me into her closet, and entered into a long discourse, which it would tire you to repeat —but the substance of it was my unhappy situation, when she took me out of the hands of lady Manning—her tenderness for me; the great things she designed to do for me, nothing less than making me sole heir; the folly of marrying for love, exemplified in my father's marriage; her fears that I was going to throw myself away on some young fop, who would make me miserable; Sir Isaac Darby's generous passion for me, his great estate, the handsome settlements he proposed to make; and lastly, the pleasure I would give her, by suiting in this case my inclinations to my interest.

'To all this I answered very particularly; I acknow-

ledged ſhe had ſhewn a parental tenderneſs for me, and I had paid her, and ever would pay her, I ſaid, the duty and obedience due from a child to a parent: that in the article of marriage, my natural parents would certainly have allowed me a negative voice, which was all I claimed now, ſince I was abſolutely reſolved not only never to marry without her conſent, but not to admit of any addreſs which ſhe diſapproved. I begged her never to propoſe Sir Iſaac Darby to me again, becauſe my heart wholly rejected him; though at the ſame time I proteſted (as I might well do) that my affections were entirely diſengaged.

'All your aſſeverations, replied my aunt, (who had liſtened to me with many ſigns of impatience) ſignify nothing without you marry Sir Iſaac Darby; and by that only ſhall I be convinced that your head does not run upon ſome wild ſhowy fellow, who will make your heart ake.

'Here, continued ſhe, is a baronet of an ancient family, a large eſtate, of good morals, not diſagreeable in his perſon—but what is perſon in a man? who loves you, who will make you a large jointure, who gives you a title, place, equipage, all that a prudent ſenſible woman can deſire, and you refuſe him; grant that he is older than you, he has the more wiſdom—O my dear, how difficult it was for me to forbear laughing here; but you are not in love with him—let me tell you, Henrietta, that is not a plea for a young woman of delicacy—What, is it not poſſible for you to make a good wife to an honeſt gentleman, without bringing with you all that romantic paſſion which forces girls to jump out of windows to get to their fellows; and, for the ſake of a man, who poſſibly a few weeks before was an abſolute ſtranger to them, break through every tie of natural affection, and, to be a wife, be contented to be neither daughter, ſiſter, or niece.

'I was going to ſpeak—My aunt in a peremptory manner laid her hand on my mouth, I will not hear a word more, ſaid ſhe, on this ſubject; if you refuſe to give your hand to Sir Iſaac, I know what I am to think

—I give you two days to confider of it. I have hitherto treated you as my own child; if you comply you fhall find me a mother, if not I am only your aunt; and you know how fome who ftand in that degree of relation to you behave. This was pretty plain, my dear: I was fo fhocked that I fuffered my aunt to go out of the clofet without making any anfwer; and retired to my own chamber to weep in freedom.'

CHAP. VI.

In which our Heroine is very reafonably alarmed.

'IT was indeed true that my father's family took no notice of me, notwithftanding the applications that had been made to them; and when my aunt Meadows introduced me at my uncle's the earl of ——, I was received fo coldly by him and his lady, that I inly refolved never to expofe myfelf to fuch a mortification again, and my aunt entered fo far into my juft refentment, as never to prefs me to make them a fecond vifit.

'My brother was abroad; if living he neglected me; and perhaps I had no brother; for how elfe could I account for fo long a filence in one who feemed to have fuch tender affections? I had no refource but in Mr. Bale's friendfhip, and he was at this time unluckily at too great a diftance to be of any ufe to me. I faw plainly that I muft either accept Sir Ifaac Darby's hand, or be thrown back into my former indigence and dependence.—Dreadful alternative!—But the man confidered, was there room to paufe long?

'My imagination fuggefted to me every poffible ill confequence of the lofs of my aunt's favour, but weighed againft the mifery of fuch a marriage, they all feemed light.—Yet would you think it, my dear, amidft the many real evils I had reafon to apprehend by difobliging my aunt, one trifling circumftance dwelt ftrongeft upon my mind, and that was the occafion of triumph I fhould give to lady Manning, who would exult over my fallen expectations and return to indigence. I was afhamed of my own weaknefs when I found this thought capable of giving me fo much pain; and in the contemplation of greater misfortunes which were likely to be

my lot, I ſought to blunt my ſenſe of theſe leſſer ones, which were the neceſſary conſequences of them.

'Towards evening Mrs. White threw herſelf in my way, as I was walking penſive in the garden. She told me that my aunt was full of hopes that I would comply: that Sir Iſaac was to be invited to-morrow; and that it was expected the generoſity of his propoſals with regard to ſettlements, the rich preſents of jewels which he would offer, and his reſolution to agree to every thing I deſired, would make ſuch an impreſſion on my mind, as to induce me to give a free and willing conſent. Mrs. White added, that ſince my aunt was ſo determined upon concluding this match, ſhe wiſhed I could conquer my averſion to it; for ſhe feared that my abſolute refuſal would ſo irritate her, that ſhe might be eaſily perſuaded to take ſome violent reſolution againſt me; and there is one, ſaid ſhe, who will ſpare no pains to bring that to paſs.

'I replied, that nothing which could befal me from the loſs of my aunt's favour, was to be dreaded ſo much as being the wife of Sir Iſaac Darby, and that my reſolution was fixed. Mrs. White ſighed, ſhrugged her ſhoulders, and haſtened from me for fear of being obſerved, ſeeming, as I thought, to believe my caſe deſperate.

'When ſhe was gone, I conſidered that if I accepted of the two days my aunt had given me to come to a reſolution, I ſhould be expoſed, during that time, to the odious courtſhip of Sir Iſaac, whoſe preſence was, it ſeems, judged neceſſary to influence me; I therefore determined to declare myſelf immediately, and plunge at once into the diſtreſſes that awaited me.

'I left the garden inſtantly, and went in ſearch of my aunt; as ſoon as I entered the room where ſhe was, ſhe laid down a book ſhe had been reading, and looked earneſtly at me, ſeeming, by my countenance on which I believe was impreſſed the agitation of my mind, to expect ſomething extraordinary.

'You have indulged me, Madam, ſaid I, with two days to conſider of your propoſal with regard to Sir Iſaac

Darby: but so long a time is not necessary: were any thing at stake than the future happiness of my life, you should find me incapable of opposing your will; but in this case it is not possible for me to obey you. Judge of my aversion to that man, when I protest to you, that if death or his hand was an alternative that I must chuse, I would, without hesitation, prefer death as the lesser hardship.

'This determined speech seemed to surprise my aunt, though I think she had no reason to expect I could ever be prevailed upon to marry Sir Isaac.

'You are an undone girl, said she, after a pause of near three minutes; I believe your father's folly is hereditary to you—I have done my duty—Your obstinacy be upon your own head.

'I confess I was greatly affected with her calm resentment, so likely to be lasting: I burst into tears; she went out of the room, I followed her into another, where Mr. Danvers was sitting. As soon as I perceived him, I hastily withdrew, for I was not willing to be seen by him in that state of dejection.—I retired to my own room, and there, after I had relieved my mind by another flood of tears, I endeavoured to soften my own apprehensions of what might be the effects of having disobliged the only relation who would own me, and collected all my fortitude to enable me to bear the worst that could happen. But that worst, my dear, proved so terrible to my frighted imagination, that to avoid it, I have taken a very imprudent and dangerous step, and whither it will lead me, Heaven knows; for my heart forbodes some fatal consequence from it.'

'Lord bless me!' said Miss Woodby, 'after escaping such an odious husband as Sir Isaac, was any thing worse to be feared!.'

'Ah!' cried Miss Courteney; 'but it was not certain whether I should escape him; for if my aunt's scheme had taken place, I had every thing to fear.' 'What could your aunt's scheme be?' said Miss Woodby, impatiently. 'Mr. Danvers's rather,' said Miss

Courteney, ' and its being his, made it more formidable.

' My aunt ſeemed ſo eaſy and chearful at ſupper, and ſpoke to me ſo kindly, that all my gloomy apprehenſions vaniſhed, and I was happy in the thought that I ſhould preſerve her favour without becoming the wife of Sir Iſaac Darby; but I was ſoon undeceived. Mrs. White tapped at my door, after ſhe had put my aunt to bed; I let her in, and, in a rapture of joy, I told her how favourably my aunt ſeemed diſpoſed, and that I ſhould no longer be perſecuted about the odious baronet. O Miſs! ſaid ſhe, I am afraid this calm fortels a ſtorm. A ſtorm, repeated I, what do you mean?

' I always dreaded, ſaid ſhe, that Mr. Danvers would uſe his power with my lady to your diſadvantage; but who could have imagined that he would prevail upon her to ſend you to France, and lock you up in a nunnery?

' How! exclaimed I, almoſt breathleſs with terror and ſurpriſe—Confine me in a nunnery! Is it poſſible—How came you to know this?

' By the ſtrangeſt chance in the world, replied Mrs. White. I am not uſed to liſten, I ſcorn it; but ſome words that fell from the chaplain, alarmed me on your account, and I reſolved, if poſſible, to know what he was driving at. This evening, purſued ſhe, I went to my lady to take her directions about ſome laces I was making up for her. I found the chaplain with her: they ſeemed to be in deep diſcourſe; and my lady, as if angry at being interrupted, bid me, in a haſty manner, come to her another time. I went away immediately; and juſt as I ſhut the door, I heard the chaplain ſay, Depend upon it, Madam, there is no other way to preſerve her from ruin. Certainly, thought I to myſelf, this muſt concern Miſs Courteney; I put my ear to the key-hole, and heard my lady anſwer, But ſhall I not be called a tyrant, for ſending my niece to a convent contrary to her inclinations?

' The chaplain made a long ſpeech, which I could not diſtinctly hear; but he told her ſhe muſt make a fa-

crifice of ſuch idle cenſures to God; that it was her duty to endeavour to ſave a ſoul; that you were in a ſtate of perdition; and oh, my dear Miſs! but that I cannot believe, he aſſured her you would throw yourſelf away upon the idle fellow (thoſe were his words) that you were in love with, if not prevented by bolts and bars.

'In the end my lady ſeemed determined, and they conſulted together about the means they ſhould uſe, to entrap you into a convent. My lady propoſed making a tour to Paris, by way of amuſement, to take you with her, and leave you in ſome monaſtery. Mr. Danvers, I found, objected to that; he deſired ſhe would leave the affair wholly to his management, and ſaid he would think of ſome expedient that would be leſs troubleſome to her. I did not ſtay to hear any more; for I was apprehenſive of ſome of the ſervants coming that way, and diſcovering me at ſo mean a trick as liſtening.

'Good God! cried I, what ſhall I do? what ſhall I do? repeatedly I paſſionately, in the anguiſh of my mind. My guardian is not in town! to whom ſhall I apply for advice and aſſiſtance in this extremity? I may be hurried away to this horrid confinement, when I leaſt expect it.

'That is impoſſible, ſaid Mrs. White; forewarned forearmed, as the ſaying is. Since you know what is intended againſt you, you muſt be upon your guard; you cannot be carried away againſt your will.

'Mrs. White did not appear to me to have a very juſt ſenſe of the danger I was expoſed to; for what will not bigotry attempt! I was glad therefore when ſhe left me to my own reflections; which ſhe did, after begging me to be compoſed, and not to diſcover the manner in which I came by the intelligence ſhe had given me.

'The latter part of her injunction I faithfully promiſed to perform; but, oh! my dear Miſs Woodby, how was it poſſible for me to be compoſed amidſt ſuch dreadful apprehenſions?—To be locked up in a gloomy monaſtery, perhaps for ever, expoſed to the perſecutions of ſuperſtitious zeal; but, this was not the worſt of my fears—To

be conſigned over, perhaps, to the care of a wolf in ſheep's cloathing, who had already ſhocked my delicacy with freedoms, that, proceeding from ſuch a man, in ſuch a character, might well awaken the moſt frightful ſuſpicions.'

'Truly,' ſaid Miſs Woodby, that ſeemed to be the worſt part of your danger; for I don't like this jeſuit at all, every thing may be dreaded from a hypocrite: but, as to the being ſhut up in a convent, there is no great matter in it. Such beauty as yours would have ſoon engaged ſome adventurous knight in your cauſe, who would have ſcaled the walls to have delivered you.—Oh, what a charming adventure! I proteſt I would ſubmit to a few months confinement in ſuch a place, for the pleaſure of being delivered from it in ſo gallant a manner.

'Sure you are not in earneſt,' ſaid Henrietta. 'Indeed but I am.' replied Miſs Woodby. 'Well,' reſumed Miſs Courteney, 'you have very whimſical notions; but I aſſure you none of theſe entered into my head: the loſs of liberty ſeemed to me ſo frightful a misfortune, that I was almoſt diſtracted with the idea of it.

'The firſt thought that occurred to me, and which indeed was the moſt natural, was to prevent my aunt from carrying her deſigns into execution, by leaving her. I might well imagine ſhe would uſe violence to detain me, if I attempted it openly; therefore it was neceſſary to ſteal myſelf away, and this has the air of an adventure you muſt own; but as I had no confident in this deſign, no gallant youth to aſſiſt me in my eſcape, and did not even make uſe of a ladder of ropes, or endanger breaking my neck, I am afraid this adventure is not in a taſte high enough for you.'

'Oh, you are rallying me!' ſaid Miſs Woodby; 'but I long to know how you eſcaped; no confident! how could you manage ſo arduous an undertaking by yourſelf?'

'With great eaſe, I aſſure you,' ſaid Miſs Courteney; 'and I don't think you will allow it to be an eſcape, when I tell you I walked peaceably out of a door, not

without some trepidation however, which arose less from the fear of a pursuit, than the consciousness that I was taking a step which every young woman of delicacy will if possible avoid.

'As I have already told you, I instantly resolved upon leaving my aunt; but where should I seek an asylum? Mr. Bale, whose protection I might have requested wit h honour, was not in town; my brother was abroad; none of my father's relations would receive me; I had no acquaintances but such as were my aunt's, to whom any application would have been very improper, as I should have found very strong prejudices to combat with; it being a received maxim among persons of a certain age, that young people are always in the wrong; besides, one seldom meets with any one who has not that littleness of soul which is mistaken for prudence, and teaches that it is not safe to meddle with other people's affairs, which narrow notion prevents many a good office, many a kind interposition; so that we seem to live only for ourselves.

'My perplexed mind could suggest no better expedient to me, than to seize the first opportunity that offered to go to London, and there conceal myself in a private lodging till Mr. Bale's return, who I doubted not would take me under his protection. Before I had fixed upon this resolution, great part of the night was wasted; so that I lay later than usual the next morning. When I went down to breakfast, I found my aunt dressed, and her coach ordered. She took notice that my eyes looked heavy; I told her I had a violent head-ach, which indeed was true: she said it was a cold, and bid me keep myself warm.

'I am going to Richmond, added she, it will be late before I return to dinner; therefore let the cook get you a chicken when you chuse to dine, and don't walk out to increase your cold.

'My heart leaped so when I found I was to be left at home, that I was afraid my emotion was visible in my countenance. My aunt however did not observe it; for, apparently, she had no suspicion that I knew any thing

of her deſign to ſend me to a convent: and therefore ſhe could not poſſibly gueſs my intention to leave her. But ſhe certainly overacted her part, all on a ſudden to drop her favourite ſcheme, the marrying me to Sir Iſaac Darby; and when I might reaſonably expect that my obſtinate refuſal to comply with her deſires, would create ſome coldneſs in her towards me, to find her not only free from all reſentment, but even particularly kind and obliging. Sure this was ſufficient to raiſe doubts in my mind, that ſomething more than ordinary was at the bottom of all this affibility.

'It often happens that cunning over-reaches itſelf; for it ſeldom hits a medium, and generally does too much or too little. My aunt's behaviour would have led me to ſuſpect that ſome deſign was forming againſt me; but if it had not been for Mrs. White's information, I ſhould never have been able to diſcover what it was, for my own penetration would have gone no further than to ſuggeſt, that ſome ſcheme was laid to bring about my marriage with Sir Iſaac Darby; but this fear would have been ſufficient to have winged my flight, ſo that the arts my aunt made uſe of to lull me into ſecurity, proved the very foundation of my doubts.

'I had a new palpitation of the heart when I ſaw the chaplain follow my aunt into the coach. Sure! thought I, Heaven approves of my deſign to get away, ſince ſo many circumſtances concur to make it practicable. It was natural, my dear, as my religion was in danger from the perſecutions preparing for me, to think Heaven intereſted in the ſucceſs of my intended eſcape.

'There is certainly ſomething very pleaſing in ſuppoſing one's ſelf the peculiar care of Providence on certain occaſions. A Roman catholic would have made little leſs than a miracle of ſo favourable a concurrence of circumſtances. However, I ſuppreſſed this riſing ſally of ſpiritual vanity, and employed my thoughts in contriving how to get to town with convenience and ſafety, without expecting any ſupernatural aſſiſtance.'

Here Miſs Woodby broke in upon the fair narrator,

with an exclamation that will be found in the following chapter.

CHAP. VII.

In which Henrietta concludes her Hiſtory.

'OH! my dear,' interrupted Miſs Woodby, laughing, 'you have given an excellent name to a ſpecies of folly, which at once excites one's laughter and indignation. I know an old lady who is a conſtant frequenter of the chapel in Oxford road, that has arrived to ſuch a heighth of ſpiritual vanity as you juſtly term it, that ſhe fancies Providence is perpetually exerting itſelf in miracles for her preſervation, and that her moſt inconſiderable actions are under the immediate direction of Heaven; for ſhe will tell you with ſurpriſing meekneſs and humility, that unworthy as ſhe is, ſhe is in high favour with God; if ſhe happens to ſtumble againſt a ſtone without falling, ſhe ſays, with a ſmile of conſcious ſatisfaction, To be ſure God is very good to *me*. According to her, *God acts by partial, not by general laws*. And ſhould it ceaſe raining immediately before ſhe is to go out, either to church or a viſit, it is all one, ſhe ſuppoſes that Providence is at that moment at work for her, and has cleared the ſkies that ſhe may walk with conveniency; for ſhe cannot always purchaſe a coach or a chair, half of her little income being appropriated to the preachers, from whoſe doctrine ſhe has imbibed theſe ſelf-flattering ideas.'

'Oh!' ſaid Miſs Courteney, laughing, you have heightened the colouring of this picture exceedingly.'

'Upon my word I have not,' ſaid Miſs Woodby, 'and—but that I am not willing to interrupt your ſtory ſo long, I could give you an hundred proofs of this odd ſpecies of pride; for I aſſure you, my dear, the haughtieſt beauty in the drawing-room, amidſt a croud of adorers, and in the fulleſt diſplay of airs and graces, has not half the vanity of one of theſe ſaints of Whitefield's or Weſley's creation.'

'I really pity the poor woman you mentioned,' ſaid Henrietta; 'ſhe appears to me to be very far from attaining to any degree of perfection: for may it not be

ſuppoſed that this unreaſonable confidence will lead her to neglect many duties very eſſential to a good chriſtian? For I have heard it obſerved, that the preachers of that ſect chiefly declaim againſt faſhionable follies; and, according to them, to dreſs with elegance, to go to a play or an opera, or to make one at a party of cards, are mortal ſins; mean time poor morals are wholly neglected, and ſuperſtition is made an equivalent for a virtuous life.'

'Yet a writer,' replied Miſs Woodby, 'who is greatly admired by our ſex, and who in his works pays court to all religions, carrying himſelf ſo evenly amidſt them, that it is hard to diſtinguiſh to which he moſt inclines, has introduced theſe modern ſaints reclaiming a woman who had led a very vicious life, and doing more than all the beſt orthodox divines had done; and he has not thrown away his compliment: I dare ſay this numerous ſect has bought up an impreſſion of his book; and is not the third edition upon the title page a very good return to it? Oh! my dear, there is no vanity like the vanity of ſome authors: it is not to be doubted but if there were muſſulmen enough in the kingdom to add a unit more to the account of thoſe editions, but we ſhould find him introducing the alcoran, making proſelytes from luxury.——But how have we wandered from your ſtory—You are ſtill at Windſor—I long to hear the reſt.'

'I aſſure you, my dear,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, ſighing, 'I have not been ſorry for this little interruption; it has given ſome relief to my mind: for I know not how it is, but the recollection of this period is painful to me; and yet under the ſame terrors, and with the ſame apprehenſions, I ſhould certainly act again as I have done. I think I told you that Mr. Danvers went in a coach with my aunt; a circumſtance with which I had reaſon to be rejoiced, as it greatly facilitated my eſcape. I was ſtill lingering over the tea-table, uncertain in what manner I ſhould perform my little journey, when Mrs. White came into the room: ſhe was apprehenſive that I ſhould be uneaſy at my aunt's and the chaplain's excurſion together, as ſuppoſing it was to ſet-

tle something relating to their scheme; and therefore made haste to inform me, that my aunt had been summoned to Richmond, by a message from a Roman catholic friend of her's, who was dangerously ill there, and desired to see her, together with Mr. Danvers, who was her ghostly father, as they term it.

'Mrs. White continued to talk to me on the subject of my aunt's design, while I was considering whether it would be proper to make her the confident of my intended flight to London, and engage her to procure me some vehicle to carry me thither. But it was possible she might not approve of my leaving my aunt so suddenly, in which case I should find it difficult to get away: besides, I did not think it reasonable to involve her in the consequences of my flight, by making her privy to it; and that the only way to enable her to justify herself to my aunt was not to make her guilty. I therefore resolved to steal out of the house, and go as far as I could on foot, not doubting but chance would throw some carriage in my way, in which I might finish my journey; and, to gain all the time I could, I told Mrs. White, that my anxiety had hindered me from sleeping all night; that I was not well, and would go to my chamber and try to get some repose, desiring her not to disturb me.

'Having thus got four hours at least before me, I resolved to write a short letter to my aunt before I went. In this letter I told her, that having accidentally discovered her intention of sending me to a convent abroad, my terrors of such a confinement had forced me to throw myself under the protection of Mr. Bale; that I hoped, through his mediation, to convince her I had been guilty of no imprudences which could merit such severe treatment as a punishment, and was not so unsettled in my religion as to be perverted by that or any other means. I begged her to believe, that except in that article, and in marrying contrary to my inclinations, I would pay her the same obedience as to a parent; but that I would rather submit to the lowest state of poverty, than marry a man whom I could neither love or esteem; or change the religion in which I was bred, and with which I was

entirely ſatisfied. I concluded with earneſtly intreating to be reſtored to her good opinion, which I aſſured her I would always endeavour to deſerve.

'Having ſealed and directed this letter, I put it into one of my dreſſing boxes, not doubting but as ſoon as I was miſſing, every thing that belonged to me would be ſearched for letters, in hopes of further diſcoveries. I next tied up ſome linen in a handkerchief, and with an aching heart, ſallied out of my chamber, and croſſed a paſſage room which had ſteps leading to the garden. As ſoon as I had got out of the back-door, which opened into the foreſt, I concluded myſelf ſafe from diſcovery, and mended my pace; having no difficulty in finding my way, becauſe I purſued the road which I had often traverſed in a coach or a chaiſe.

'You will eaſily imagine my mind was full of melancholy reflections, and indeed ſo entirely was I engroſſed by them for near an hour, that I did not perceive I was tired, till I grew ſo faint I was hardly able to move a ſtep farther. I had now got into the open road, and it being about the time when I might expect to ſee ſome of the ſtage coaches from Windſor paſs that way, I ſat down under the ſhade of a large tree, at ſome diſtance from the road, impatiently wiſhing for the ſight. All this time I had not been alarmed with the fear of meeting with any inſult, for I had ſeen no one from whom I could apprehend any ſuch thing; but I had ſcarce enjoyed this comfortable ſhelter three minutes, when I perceived two ill-looking fellows, as I thought them, making towards me with all the ſpeed they were able. I ſtarted up in inconceivable terror, looking round me to ſee if any help was near if they ſhould aſſault me, when I fortunately diſcovered the ſtage-coach; and being now eaſed of my fears, I reſumed my ſtation, till it was come near enough for me to ſpeak to the driver. The two fellows who had given me ſuch a terrible alarm, ſtopped ſhort upon ſeeing the coach, and I really believe I had an eſcape from them.

'I called out to the coachman as ſoon as he could hear me. You know, my dear, the difficulties I found

in getting admiſſion. Little did thoſe good women, who refuſed it, imagine that to avoid a ſlight inconvenience to themſelves, they were conſigning me over to the greateſt diſtreſs imaginable.'

'Wretches!' exclaimed Miſs Woodby, 'I cannot think of them without deteſtation; but, my dear, purſued ſhe, did not you wonder to ſee a perſon of any figure in a ſtage-coach? As for you, I ſoon diſcovered there was ſomething extraordinary in your caſe: but what did you think of me with ſuch company, and in ſuch an equipage?

'Indeed, my dear,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, 'at that time a ſtage-coach appeared to me a moſt deſirable vehicle, and I had not then the leaſt notion of its being a mean one; ſo greatly do our opinions of things alter with our circumſtances and ſituations: beſides, a difficulty then occurred to my thoughts, which, amidſt the hurry and precipitation with which I quitted my aunt's houſe, had not been ſufficiently attended to before, and that was how I ſhould diſpoſe of myſelf for a few days, till Mr. Bale's return; for it was neceſſary I ſhould conceal myſelf with great care, having ſo much to apprehend from my aunt's bigotry and prejudices, and the (perhaps) intereſted officiouſneſs of her chaplain.

'Under what ſtrange diſadvantages had I lodgings to ſeek for! by an aſſumed name, with an immediate occaſion for them; and no recommendation to any particular houſe, which I could be ſure was a reputable one. Your politeneſs, and the unexpected offer of your friendſhip, encouraged me to communicate my diſtreſs to you, and to intreat your aſſiſtance; and I muſt ſtill regret the unlucky miſtake that brought me hither inſtead of Mrs. Egret's. And now, my dear, you have my whole ſtory before you. Have I not been very unfortunate? and am I not in the moſt dreadful ſituation? But what it chiefly concerns me to know, does your judgment acquit me of imprudence and folly in this precipitate flight from my aunt, to whom I owed ſo many benefits, and on whom I depended for ſupport?'

'Approve your flight!' cried Miſs Woodby; 'Yes

certainly, child: who would not fly from a bigot, a priest, and an old hideous lover? I protest I would in your case have done the same thing.' 'Well, that is some comfort,' replied Miss Courteney; 'but every body will not think as you do; and to a mind of any delicacy, sure nothing is so shocking as to have a reputation to defend; and the step I have taken will no doubt expose me to many unfavourable censures.'

'And do you imagine,' said Miss Woodby, 'that with a form so pleasing, and an understanding so distinguished, you will be exempted from the tax that envy is sure to levy upon merit? Don't you know what the most sensible of all poets says:

'Envy will merit as it's shade pursue,
'And like a shadow prove the substance true.'

'Take my word for it, it is no great compliment we pay to persons, when we tell them that all the world speaks well of them; for those who are remarkable for any shining qualities will be more envied than admired, and frequently more calumniated than praised. But, child,' pursued the volatile Miss Woodby, assuming a sprightly air, 'how do you intend to dispose of yourself to-day; it is late: I must go home to dress.'

'Dispose of myself,' repeated Miss Courteney, 'even in this solitary chamber; for I am determined, since I must stay here a day or two longer, to be as little with my landlady as possible.'

Miss Woodby then fluttered down stairs, followed by her fair friend, who took that opportunity to tell Mrs. Eccles, that she should not leave her so suddenly as she had imagined, which was very agreeable news to the milliner; who had no other objection to her beautiful lodger, but her extreme reserve, which did not at all suit her purposes.

CHAP. VIII.

Containing nothing either new or extraordinary.

MISS Courteney, after having traversed her chamber several times in great restless of mind, at length resolved to take a hackney coach and drive to Mr. Bale's,

ſuppoſing ſhe ſhould know from his clerks or ſervants the exact time when he was expected home; at leaſt they could give her a direction where to write to him, and it would be ſome comfort to acquaint him with her ſituation, and have his advice.

She had no ſooner formed this deſign than ſhe haſtened to put it in execution; and having made a ſlight alteration in her dreſs, ſhe went down to Mrs. Eccles, and deſired her to ſend her maid for a coach, telling her ſhe was obliged to go into the city upon buſineſs, and deſired her not to wait for her at dinner. Mrs. Eccles inſiſted upon waiting till four o'clock at leaſt, and attended her to the door, leſs out of complaiſance than to hear where ſhe ordered the coach to drive: for the inquietude, irreſolution, and penſiveneſs, which ſhe diſcovered in her fair lodger, extremely heightened her curioſity to know her affairs.

Henrietta, though ſhe did not ſuſpect the motive of her officiouſneſs, yet not thinking it proper to let her know where ſhe was going, only bid the coachman drive to St. Paul's church-yard, and when there, ſhe gave him a fuller direction. Alas! ſighed ſhe, when the coach ſtopped before the great gates of her guardian's houſe, were the hoſpitable maſter of this manſion at home, here ſhould I find a ſecure aſylum.

As ſoon as a ſervant appeared, ſhe aſked if Mr. Bale was at home, that ſhe might with greater propriety introduce her farther enquiries; but was moſt agreeably ſurpriſed to hear him anſwer her in the affirmative, while he opened the coach door: however, ſhe ordered the coachman to wait, and then followed the ſervant, who introduced her into a large parlour, and retired to acquaint his maſter with her being there.

Immediately a young gentleman, of an engaging appearance, entered the room, and deſired to know her commands. Henrietta ſeeing, inſtead of her guardian, a young man whom ſhe was quite a ſtranger to, bluſhed at firſt, but a more painful ſenſe of her diſappointment ſoon ſpread a paleneſs over her fair face.

'Is not Mr. Bale at home, Sir?' ſaid ſhe, in an accent that ſhewed her concern, 'my buſineſs was with him?'

'My father, madam,' ſaid the young gentleman, 'is in Holland, from whence I came myſelf but lately; he has affairs to ſettle there which will detain him three or four weeks. But cannot I ſerve you, Madam,' added he; his voice becoming inſenſibly ſofter while he gazed on a form which it was not poſſible to behold without ſome ſenſibility. 'Pray let me know, it will give me great pleaſure if I can be in the leaſt degree uſeful to you.'

'I ſhall be obliged to you, Sir,' replied Miſs Courteney, 'if you will forward a letter from me to Mr. Bale. It is a great unhappineſs to me that he is abroad at this time: he is my guardian, and at preſent I have need of his advice and aſſiſtance.'

'Pardon me, Madam,' ſaid young Mr. Bale, 'is not your name Courteney.' 'It is Sir,' replied ſhe.

'Dear Miſs,' ſaid he, looking on her with a tender ſympathy; 'I wiſh my father was at home, ſince you wiſh ſo—And yet, perhaps, all parents are alike,' added he, after a pauſe and ſighing, 'they are too apt to imagine that happineſs conſiſts in riches. But are you in a place of ſafety, Miſs—Are you ſure you are in no danger of being diſcovered? I wiſh it was in my power to offer you an aſylum—but—'

'Bleſs me, Sir!' interrupted Henrietta, in great aſtoniſhment, 'you ſeem to be perfectly well acquainted with my ſituation.'

'Yes, Madam,' ſaid Mr. Bale, 'I know ſomething of your affairs, and from my ſoul I approve of your courage and reſolution. A gentleman, named Danvers, was here yeſterday to enquire for you; your aunt's chaplain, is he not?'

'Yes, Sir,' replied Miſs Courteney, 'and my perſecutor:—but what did he ſay? I ſuppoſe he repreſented me in ſtrange colours.'

'You need only to be ſeen, Madam,' ſaid Mr. Bale, 'to undeceive the moſt prejudiced: yet what he ſaid was

not disadvantageous to you, unless,' added he, with a soft smile, 'you think it a fault to have a tender heart.'

'Ah! the wretch,' interrupted Miss Courteney, not able to contain her indignation; 'I see he has been propagating falshoods injurious to my reputation; after having poisoned the mind of my aunt with suspicions that were the cause of my losing her affection, he is endeavouring to deprive me of every friend I have in the world—But this, Sir, is the plain truth: he suggested, as I have no reason to doubt, a preposterous match for me to my aunt; I rejected it; he found means to persuade my aunt, that I listened privately to the addresses of some man who was an improper match for me. My aunt, in order to prevent my ruin, as she supposed, insisted upon my accepting the husband she had chosen for me; and, upon my obstinate refusal, was prevailed upon by her chaplain to resolve to confine me in a nunnery abroad. I had intelligence of this design, and I secretly left my aunt's house, to prevent her executing it; but I am so far from having any secret engagement, that if I could be sure my aunt would not pursue her scheme of entrapping me in a convent, I would instantly return and bind myself by the most solemn oaths never to marry any one whom she does not approve.

'You see, Sir,' proceeded Miss Courteney, 'what need I have of your father's assistance; he is my only friend and protector; through his mediation I might expect to be restored to the good opinion of my aunt.'

'Well, Madam,' said Mr. Bale, 'if you will write to him, I will take care of your letter; and if it be ready to-morrow, I will attend you myself for it; I hope you have no objection to my knowing where you are: in my father's absence I shall be proud to act as your guardian; though he has had the happiness of knowing you longer, yet his concern for your interest cannot be greater than mine. Shall I wait on you to-morrow morning, Miss?' added he. Henrietta, by his manner of urging this request, and his frequently casting his eye towards the door, as if afraid of some interruption, con-

cluding that ſhe detained him from buſineſs of more importance, roſe up immediately, and, giving him a direction to her lodgings by the name of Benſon, told him, ſhe would have her letter ready; but aſked if it would not come ſafe incloſed to him by the penny-poſt, being unwilling, ſhe ſaid, to give him the trouble of coming for it.

'I beg, Madam,' ſaid he, as he took her hand to lead her to the coach, 'that you will believe I can have no greater pleaſure than that of ſerving you. It is neceſſary that I ſhould have an opportunity of talking to you at leiſure, that I may know how I can be farther uſeful to you.'

Having helped her into the coach, he bowed low, and retired haſtily, with ſuch an expreſſion of tender concern on his countenance as any woman, leſs free from vanity than Miſs Courteney, would not have failed to obſerve; but ſhe making no other reflections on his behaviour, than that he was more polite than perſons uſually are who are bred up to buſineſs, congratulated herſelf on having found a friend, through whom ſhe could ſecurely correſpond with her guardian, and receive his advice, ſo that ſhe might now conſider herſelf as being under his immediate care and direction, though abſent; a circumſtance that greatly alleviated her uneaſineſs.

Mrs. Eccles, who had waited dinner for her longer than had been agreed on, expreſſed great pleaſure at ſeeing her look ſo chearful. 'To be ſure, ſaid ſhe, you have heard ſome unexpected good news, I am heartily glad of it.—Well, now I hope you will have more ſpirits.' Henrietta ſmiled, but made no anſwer; for an ingenuous mind can only evade indiſcreet curioſity by ſilence.

The cloth was ſcarce removed, when the young lord, who had now taken poſſeſſion of his apartment in Mrs. Eccles's houſe, came into the parlour. Henrietta immediately roſe up to retire to her own chamber, when he ſtarting back, and ſtanding at the door as if to obſtruct her paſſage, 'I came, ſaid he, Mrs. Eccles, to beg you would make me a diſh of coffee; but ſince my preſence

drives this young lady away, I will go up ſtairs again.'

'Oh, by no means, my lord,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles, 'I am ſure Miſs Benſon will not let you think ſo. You are not going, Miſs, are you? added ſhe, turning to Henrietta.

'I have letters to write,' ſaid the young lady, 'that will take me up the whole afternoon.'

'Well,' ſaid my lord, 'I will drink no coffee then; for unleſs you ſtay, Miſs, I ſhall be perſuaded that my coming has driven you away. Let me intreat you,' purſued he, entering and leading her to a chair, 'to allow me the pleaſure of drinking a diſh of coffee with you; you will have time enough afterwards to write your letters.'

Miſs Courteney, who was willing to avoid the appearance of ſingularity, ſat down again, though with ſome reluctance, telling his lordſhip that ſhe would not be the means of diſappointing him of his coffee, but that ſhe muſt inſiſt upon being permitted to withdraw in half an hour, having buſineſs of conſequence upon her hands.

The young nobleman gave little attention to what ſhe ſaid, but gazed on her with an earneſtneſs that threw her into ſome confuſion. The milliner going out of the room to give orders about the coffee, he began in moſt vehement language to declare a paſſion for her, and called in the aſſiſtance of poetry, to expreſs his admiration of her charms.

Henrietta, who in her own character would have treated this manner of addreſs with ridicule and contempt, thought it became her, in her preſent circumſtances, to reſent it ſeriouſly; therefore riſing, with ſome ſigns of indignation, ſhe told him, that ſince his lordſhip thought proper to entertain her with ſuch kind of diſcourſe, ſhe would immediately retire. My lord, who ſaw ſhe was angry in good earneſt, was exceſſively afraid of her leaving him; therefore taking her hand, which he forcibly held, till he had ſealed a vow upon it with his lips, that he would not ſay another word to offend her, he brought her back to her ſeat, which, upon ſeeing Mrs. Eccles enter, ſhe reſumed.

The converſation then took another turn; but Henrietta was too much chagrined to mix in it with any degree of chearfulneſs: beſides, the party ſeemed to her to be but ill aſſorted, a nobleman, a milliner, and a young woman in obſcure circumſtances. Her delicacy was ſhocked, and all the politeneſs ſhe was miſtreſs of was ſcarce ſufficient to hinder her from ſhewing how much ſhe was diſpleaſed with herſelf and her company.

As ſoon as the tea equipage was removed, ſhe looked at her watch; and ſeeming apprehenſive that ſhe ſhould not have time enough to write her letters, ſhe withdrew with ſuch precipitation, that they had no opportunity to ſolicit her longer ſtay.

'This is a ſtrange girl,' ſaid the young lord, throwing himſelf into his chair, from whence he had riſen to return the haſty compliment ſhe made at her departure, but divinely handſome; 'who can ſhe be? I vow to Gad I believe I ſhall be in love with her in earneſt: have you made no diſcovery yet, Mrs. Eccles' purſued he; 'there is certainly ſome myſtery in the caſe, and a love-myſtery it muſt be; for women are not even faithful to their own ſecrets, unleſs an amour is the buſineſs, and then they are impenetrable.'

'Your lordſhip may be ſure,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles, 'that I have ſpared no pains to diſcover who ſhe is; but ſhe is exceſſively reſerved, and talks ſo little, that there is no probability of intrapping her: yet, I think there is one way by which your curioſity may be ſatisfied. Your lordſhip has ſeen a gay flighty lady with her, of whom ſhe is very fond.'

'What, that ugly creature!' ſaid my lord, 'that faſtened upon me in your ſhop; do you mean her? Is Miſs Benſon fond of that thing?'

'Oh! very fond,' replied Mrs. Eccles. 'They were ſhut up together four hours this very morning.'

'Then depend upon it ſhe is the confident,' ſaid his lordſhip. 'Oh! I gueſs your ſcheme; you would have me bribe her.'

'Bribe her, my lord,' repeated Mrs. Eccles; 'ſhe ſeems to be a woman of ſome faſhion. I dare ſay you

you would affront her extremely, by offering her a bribe.'

'I am very ſure,' interrupted his lordſhip, 'that ſhe will not be able to reſiſt the bribe I ſhall offer her: I will flatter her, my dear Mrs. Eccles, till I not only become maſter of all her friends ſecrets, but even her own; but how ſhall I get an opportunity of talking to her alone?'

'I will engage,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles, 'that it will not be long before ſhe is here again; and, if your lordſhip ſhould happen to be below when ſhe comes, I fancy you would not find it difficult to detain her a little while from her friend.'

'Well' ſaid my lord, 'I leave it to you to manage this interview for me: when I know who this Miſs Benſon is, I can make my approaches accordingly; but when do you expect her down ſtairs again?' 'Not till ſupper-time,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles; 'ſhe is never weary of being alone.' 'Ah, that is a bad ſign!' ſaid he, 'I doubt I have a rival.—Well, I will look in upon you at ten o'clock; perhaps I may find her with you.'

Mrs. Eccles aſſuring him ſhe would engage her till that time, if poſſible. He went away humming an opera air, but with leſs vacuity of thought than uſual, Miſs Benſon being ſo much in his head, that, if he had been accuſtomed to reflection, he would have concluded ſhe was in his heart alſo, and that he was in love with her in earneſt.

Henrietta in the mean time was employed in writing her letter to Mr. Bale, to whom ſhe gave a faithful account of all that happened to her, and earneſtly intreated his good offices towards effecting a reconciliation between her aunt and her. The inconveniences ſhe ſaw herſelf expoſed to in her preſent ſituation, made her ſo deſirous of this happy event, that her letter was almoſt a continued repetition of ſolicitations for that purpoſe. She begged him, in caſe he did not return to England, to write to her aunt, and endeavour to ſoften her, aſſuring him that ſhe pretended to no greater liberty than what an obedient daughter might expect from a parent; being reſolved to obey her will in every thing, provided

ſhe might not be compelled to marry the old baronet, nor confined in a nunnery with a view to the change of her religion.

She expreſſed her ſatisfaction in the polite behaviour of his ſon to her, whom ſhe would conſider, ſhe ſaid, as her guardian in his abſence, and would take no ſtep without his advice and concurrence.

She had finiſhed her letter long before the milliner's uſual hour of ſupper; but being reſolved to go down no more that evening, ſhe ſpread letters and papers upon the table, as if ſhe ſtill continued extremely buſy. Mrs. Eccles, upon entering her chamber to know if ſhe was ready for ſupper, found her with the pen ſtill in her hand; and was a good deal mortified to hear her ſay, that, having dined ſo late, ſhe would not ſup that night, but would finiſh her letters before ſhe went to bed.

Mrs. Eccles did not think proper to preſs her; for her extreme reſerve inſpired her with a kind of awe, that made her cautious of giving her the leaſt diſguſt; and Henrietta taking leave of her at the chamber door for the night, ſhe went away in great concern for the diſappointment his lordſhip would meet with.

It was indeed a very mortifying diſappointment to him; for his impatience to ſee Miſs Courteney had brought him back much ſooner than he had intended, and Mrs. Eccles, when ſhe came down ſtairs, found him already in her parlour. When he heard the young lady's reſolution, not to appear again that night, he took an unceremonious leave of his complaiſant landlady, and joined his company again at White's, wondering to find himſelf in ſo ill an humour, on ſo ſlight an occaſion, and that dice and Burgundy were ſcarce ſufficient to call off his thoughts from this coy unknown, whom yet he did not deſpair of gaining.

CHAP. IX.

A very ſhort Chapter.

HENRIETTA, upon her coming down next morning to breakfaſt, was informed by Mrs. Eccles, that a gentleman had been enquiring for her that morning; but, hearing ſhe was not up, had left word that he

would call again. She did not doubt but it was Mr. Bale, and was a little confused that his punctuality should so much exceed her's in an affair that immediately concerned her; but the truth was, the young merchant's impatience to see her had outstripped time, and he came much earlier than she had reason to expect him.

She retired immediately after breakfast, desiring that the gentleman might be shewn up stairs when he came again; for Mrs. Eccles, at her request, had made a small alteration in her apartment, and put her bed in an adjoining closet, that she might with more propriety receive a visit in her own room.

She was scarce got up stairs, when Mr. Bale was introduced: she apologised for the trouble he had in calling twice; and delivering him her letter, recommended it to his care with extreme earnestness, assuring him, she should be very unhappy till she had an answer. She then enquired more particularly concerning the visit Mr. Danvers had made him, anxious to collect from what he said what impression her flight had made upon her aunt.

'I will not flatter you, Miss,' said Mr. Bale, 'Lady Meadows is extremely enraged.—Mr. Danvers mentioned nothing of a design to put you into a convent; but owned that your aunt had a very advantageous match in view for you, which you rejected—and—'

'Pray go on, Sir,' said Henrietta, observing that he hesitated.

'Your aunt will have it,' Madam, pursued he, 'that your affections are engaged.—I cannot believe that a young lady of your good sense would make an improper choice—I should be very glad to be able to convince my father that nothing of this kind is the case—Excuse me, Miss, I am very anxious for your happiness; it would give me infinite joy to find that your aunt is mistaken.'

'My aunt has no reason, Sir, for her suspicions,' replied Henrietta; 'but if my affections were engaged, why should she think I had made an improper choice?'

'Ah! Miss—' eagerly interrupted Mr. Bale.

'I hope, Sir,' said Miss Courteney, gravely, you will

believe me, when I declare that my aunt's fears are without foundation: it concerns me greatly that your father ſhould entertain the ſame idle ſuſpicions; and, were he here, I am ſure I could convince him.'

'Dear Miſs,' interrupted Mr. Bale, 'I cannot ſuffer you to go on; do not imagine that I am not convinced. I had doubts, but you will excuſe them; my great concern for your happineſs was the cauſe.—Rely upon me, I beg you; I will take care my father ſhall not be prejudiced, and till his return I am your guardian.'

Henrietta, upon a little reflection, was more pleaſed than offended at the doubts he ſo candidly acknowledged; in ſo young a man, ſuch plainneſs and ſincerity were far more agreeable than the refinements of compliment and flattery, and more ſuitable to the character in which he deſired to be conſidered, and in which ſhe did conſider him. She thanked him for a ſolicitude, which ſhe ſaid was ſo advantageous to her; and to ſhew him that ſhe wiſhed to give him all imaginable ſatisfaction with regard to her conduct, ſhe entered into a particular detail of the ſituation ſhe had been in with her aunt, whoſe views, with regard to her, ſhe explained: ſhe ſlightly touched upon the character of the chaplain, and imputed to his great influence over her aunt, the raſh and ſevere reſolutions ſhe had taken againſt her.

She was proceeding to juſtify herſelf for having left her aunt's houſe; when Mr. Bale interrupted her with ſome emotion: 'every reaſonable perſon, Miſs, ſaid he, that knows your motives for taking this ſtep, will not only hold you excuſed, but will even applaud you for not ſacrificing yourſelf to riches.'

'I am ſure,' ſaid Henrietta, 'my aunt would hear reaſon, were it not for that invidious chaplain, who fills her with ſuſpicions, and animates her reſentment. Oh, that Mr. Bale was come!'

'I hope,' ſaid the young merchant, 'that we ſhall ſee him ſhortly; but in the mean time, Miſs, let me know how I can be uſeful to you: do you like your preſent lodgings? are the people ſuch as you approve? Let me know if you have any inclination to remove, and

I will endeavour to ſettle you ſome where that will be agreeable to my father; I ſuppoſe you would have no objection to lodging with an acquaintance of his, and where you will be near him?'

'No, certainly,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, 'it would be highly agreeable to me.' 'Well, Miſs,' ſaid Mr. Bale, riſing, 'I will wait on you again in a day or two: but perhaps you have occaſion for money, I have brought ſome with me; pray do not put yourſelf to any inconveniency, but draw for what ſums you have occaſion.'

'The trifle, Sir,' ſaid Henrietta, bluſhing, that is in your father's hands, will not admit of my drawing very largely; however, I will venture to take up twenty pounds, becauſe I have occaſion to purchaſe ſome trifling things; for all my cloaths are at my aunt's, and I am in great hopes ſhe will not ſend them after me: that would look indeed,' ſaid ſhe, ſighing, 'as if I muſt never expect to return again; and I am reſolved not to ſend for them, that it may appear I do expect and wiſh it.'

Mr. Bale, upon hearing this, preſſed her to take forty guineas; but ſhe ſaid, twenty would do, having ſome money by her. He then took leave of her, with a promiſe to ſee her again ſoon; and left her greatly pleaſed with his friendly behaviour, and with the proſpect of being ſoon with perſons leſs obnoxious to her than Mrs. Eccles.

She had ſcarcely depoſited her money in her deſk, when Miſs Woodby bolted into the room with her uſual robuſt livelineſs. Indeed her ſpirits were particularly exhilarated that day, having had the dear delight of converſing an whole hour with a beau, who ſaid the civileſt things to her imaginable; a piece of good fortune ſhe did not often meet with, and for which, though her vanity did not ſuffer her to find it out, ſhe was wholly indebted to her fair friend, the beau being no other than the young lord who lodged in the houſe, with whom ſhe had been engaged in converſation great part of the time that Mr. Bale was with Miſs Courteney. And if the reader is curious to know what paſſed between them, he will be fully informed in the next chapter.

CHAP. X.

Which gives the Reader a Specimen of Female Friendship.

MR. Bale had been about half an hour with Miss Courteney, when Miss Woodby came to pay her a morning visit. As soon as Mrs. Eccles saw a chair set her down at the door, she flew up stair to acquaint her noble lodger with her arrival; he instantly followed her down, and meeting Miss Woodby at the bottom of the stairs, affected a joyful surprise at his good fortune in seeing her so unexpectedly again.

'The lady you are going to visit,' said he, 'is engaged with company, I believe; but I am resolved you shall not go away,' pursued he, taking her hand and leading her into the parlour, 'I was so charmed with your conversation the first time I saw you, that it is not probable I will lose this opportunity of renewing our acquaintance.'

'Oh! your lordship is very obliging,' said Miss Woodby, suffering herself to be led into the parlour, while her transport at finding herself treated with so much gallantry, and her passionate desire of pleasing, threw her into such ridiculous affectation, that every limb and feature were distorted. Compliment, to which she was very little used, acted like strong liquors upon a weak head, she became so intoxicated, that she hardly knew what she did, which, joined to a natural aukwardness, produced the most absurd blunders in her behaviour; so that, endeavouring to trip with a lively motion to her seat, she overturned a light mahogany table that was in her way, and heard the crash of the china that was on it, with very little emotion: the pleasure of shewing herself to the greatest advantage, absolutely engrossing her; and so unseasonably did she return his lordship's polite bow, when he had seated her in her chair, that their foreheads struck against each other with a force like the concussion of two rocks; but this accident, no more than the former, disturbed Miss Woodby's enjoyment of her present happiness; and, wholly insensible to the pain of her forehead, she immediately entered into conversation with his lordship, asking him, with the liveliest

livelieſt air imaginable, if he had been at Ranelagh laſt night; never once making the leaſt reflection upon what he had told her of her friend's being engaged with company, which, as ſhe knew her ſituation, might well have raiſed her curioſity.

The beau told her, he was not there; 'but you and Miſs Benſon were, I ſuppoſe,' added he.

'Now your lordſhip mentions Miſs Benſon,' ſaid ſhe, without anſwering his queſtion, 'pray tell me how you like her; is ſhe not very handſome?'

'Yes,' replied my lord, 'ſhe is handſome; but,' added he, looking full at her, 'ſhe wants a certain lady's agreeable vivacity.'

'Oh! your ſervant, my lord,' ſaid Miſs Woodby, making the application immediately; 'but really, as your lordſhip obſerves, ſhe wants vivacity; there is ſomething heavy and lumpiſh in her.'

'Yet ſhe is genteel,' ſaid my lord. 'Oh! extremely genteel,' cried Miſs Woodby; 'but does not your lordſhip think ſhe is rather too tall? being ſo ſlender as ſhe is, does not that heighth give her a certain aukwardneſs?—But I really think ſhe has one of the fineſt complexions in the world!'

'Has ſhe not rather too much of the bloom,' ſaid my lord. 'Why, yes,' replied Miſs Woodby, 'I think her complexion wants delicacy; but no objection can be made to her eyes, you muſt own, except that they are rather too large, and roll about heavily.'

'Upon the whole,' ſaid my lord, 'Miſs Benſon is tolerable; but I perceive you are extremely fond of her by your partiality.'

'Oh, my lord,' ſaid Miſs Woodby, 'we are the greateſt friends in the world; I conceived a violent friendſhip for her the firſt moment I ſaw her—You cannot imagine how ardent my friendſhips are.'

'That is bad news for your lover,' ſaid my lord; 'for, love and friendſhip (the wiſe ſay) exclude each other; but I hope Miſs Benſon makes a proper return to ſo much affection.'

'Oh! we are united in the ſtrongeſt bands of friendſhip,' ſaid Miſs Woodby; 'the dear creature has not a thought that ſhe conceals from me: and though I have not been acquainted with her a week, ſhe has intruſted me with all her affairs.'

'Indeed!' ſaid my lord, 'not acquainted a week, and ſo communicative: are you ſure, my dear Miſs Woodby, that this young lady is not a little ſilly.'

'I cannot ſay,' replied Miſs Woodby, 'that her underſtanding is the beſt in the world; but ſhe has a very good heart.'

'Your own is very good, I do not doubt,' ſaid my lord, 'which leads you to make ſo favourable a judgment of another's.—However, as ſhe has laid open her affairs to you, you may, from the conduct ſhe has avowed, collect your opinion of her.'

'Very true,' ſaid Miſs Woodby; 'and I do aſſure your lordſhip, that I cannot help approving of her conduct, becauſe her motives were certainly juſt: though the ill judging world may perhaps condemn her for running away from her aunt; and, from her hiding herſelf in a lodging, aſſuming another name, and ſuch little circumſtances, may take occaſion to cenſure her, yet I am perſuaded in my own mind that ſhe is blameleſs.'

'Benſon is not her name then,' ſaid my lord, affecting great indifference. 'Oh, no, my lord,' ſaid Miſs Woodby, 'her name is Courteney.—But bleſs me—what have I done! I hope, my lord, you will be ſecret; I did not intend to tell your lordſhip Miſs Benſon's true name—I would not for the world violate that friendſhip I have vowed to her.'

'Depend upon it, Madam,' ſaid my lord, 'I will be ſecret as the grave. It is of no conſequence to me to know her name; I ſhall never think of it again—But to be ſure the poor girl is to be pitied—And ſo ſhe ran away from her aunt; who is her aunt, pray?'

'Her aunt's name is Meadows,' ſaid Miſs Woodby, 'lady Meadows; do you know her?'

'Not I,' ſaid my lord, throwing himſelf into a careleſs poſture, and humming an air as if his attention was

wholly disengaged; when suddenly turning again to Miss Woodby with a smile——

'Why, said he, should not you and I be as good friends as Miss Benson and you are; our acquaintance is not of a much shorter date, and perhaps commenced nearly in the same manner?'

'I protest,' said Miss Woodby, 'and so it did; for I first saw your lordship in Mrs. Eccles's shop, and I happened to meet Miss Benson in a stage-coach about four days ago.'

'And there your acquaintance began?' said my lord; 'you have improved it well since, if she has been ingenuous enough to let you into the true state of her affairs. I suppose there is a lover in the case.'

'A lover there certainly is,' said Miss Woodby; 'but he was of her aunt's chusing; and it is from this lover she fled.'

'O brave girl!' said my lord; 'but is she not fled to a lover of her own chusing!' 'No, I belive not,' said Miss Woodby.

'Well,' said my lord, 'I fancy she has deceived you, and that the gentleman who is with her now is her lover; he is a plain sort of man, Mrs. Eccles says, and looks like a merchant.'

'Oh!' said Miss Woodby, 'it is Mr. Bale her guardian, I suppose.' 'But this is a young man,' said my lord.' 'Then perhaps it is her brother,' said Miss Woodby, who was abroad with a nobleman, and is now returned.'

'I think I hear him coming down stairs,' said my lord, 'I have a mind to see him, as he goes out.' Saying this, he bowed and ran into the shop, leaving Miss Woodby a little confused at his abrupt departure; and now, for the first time, she reflected that she had been indiscreet, and revealed too much of her friend's situation: but being incapable of taking any great interest in the concerns of another, this thought did not affect her much; her spirits had been put into such a violent flurry by my lord's complaisant address to her, that she only

considered her own satisfaction in holding him in conversation; and if he had come back to her again, she would have given him all the remaining part of Miss Courteney's history, without reflecting upon the baseness of the part she was acting, and only sensible to the pleasure of engaging the attention of a man: for, by the fatal concurrence of a disagreeable figure, and much affectation, she was generally neglected by that sex, whom she took all imaginable pains to please.

His lordship, at his going out of the room, had no otherwise taken leave of her than by a running bow, which left her some faint hopes of his return; but seeing him put on his hat and go hastily out of the shop, she concluded that he did not intend to come back: therefore she went up stairs to pay a visit to her friend, to whose account of her meeting with young Mr. Bale, and his friendly behaviour to her, she gave so little attention, her thoughts being wholly engrossed by the agreeable young nobleman, that when she left her, which was a very short time afterwards, she scarce remembered any thing that had passed between them.

CHAP. XI.

In which our Heroine is in great Distress.

IN the mean time the young lord having an extreme curiosity to see the man whom he suspected to be his rival, followed Mr. Bale down the street, and had a full view of him as he crossed into another; he found he was young, and of an agreeable air, but there was a kind of pensiveness on his countenance, that did not seem to suit with the condition of a favoured lover. He readily admitted this thought, because it favoured his own wishes; he reflected on what he had heard from the communicative Miss Woodby, and concluded he had no reason to despair.

A young woman eloped from her relations, with no body about her of authority enough to control or direct her actions; these were very favourable circumstances for a man of intrigue: and he resolved to be no longer kept at a distance by a reserve, which he imputed either to affectation or artifice, and which a suitable share of boldness could only overcome.

Having ſettled the plan of his operations with Mrs. Eccles, whom he had ſtrongly engaged in his intereſts, he retired to his own lodgings; for thoſe he had at the milliner's were only hired to facilitate his deſigns upon Miſs Courteney.

That young lady finding herſelf free from his intruſion, and being leſs diſguſted with Mrs. Eccles's behaviour than uſual, who was very much upon her guard, and had her reaſons for being ſo, paſſed the day with more tranquillity of mind than her ſituation had hitherto permitted, and condeſcended, at Mrs. Eccles's intreaty, to ſpend two hours with her after ſupper at piquet.

In the mean time his lordſhip had conveyed himſelf into a cloſet in her apartment, and about eleven o'clock ſaw the unſuſpecting fair one enter with a candle in her hand, and, after cautiouſly faſtening the door, ſit down compoſedly to read.

Her beauty, which was of that ſort, which inſpires reſpect as well as love, the innocence of her deportment, her ſecurity amidſt that danger which threatened her, excited ſentiments that made him half aſhamed of his deſign. Charmed with beholding her in ſo agreeable an attitude, her fair face reclined on one of her hands, her elbow leaning on the table, her book in the other hand, which ſhe ſeemed intently to read, he opened the cloſet-door a little way, that he might have the pleaſure of contemplating her at leiſure.

This motion was not unobſerved by Henrietta; ſhe raiſed her eyes off her book, which made him haſtily pull the door cloſe again. Henrietta, now convinced that there was ſomebody in her cloſet, ſtarted up, and, dropping her book, cried out aloud for help. His lordſhip immediately ruſhed out of the cloſet, threw himſelf at her feet, and begged her not to be frightened. Indignation ſucceeded to terror; her face, which was all pale and wan before, was now crimſoned over; her eyes ſhot indignant flaſhes at the inſolent invader; but, in a moment, recollecting the danger ſhe was expoſed to, again

her face was overſpread with paleneſs, and an univerſa trembling ſeized her. The young lord, who obſerved the beautiful emotion, and was beginning to be ſhocked at the boldneſs of his attempt, again conjured her not to be afraid, and vowed he would leave her room: but Henrietta, on whom theſe aſſurances made no impreſſion, ſprung from him to the window, and, throwing up the ſaſh, cried out as loud as ſhe was able.

'Miſs Courteney,' ſaid he, riſing, but keeping at a diſtance for fear of alarming her more, 'do not indiſcreetly expoſe yourſelf, I ſwear by Heaven I will leave your room.'

'What!' cried ſhe, amazed to the laſt degree to hear him pronounce her name; 'you know me then, and yet have dared to inſult me thus—But leave me, my lord, this inſtant leave me, or I will raiſe the neighbourhood by my cries.'

'Charming creature,' ſaid his lordſhip, looking on her with tenderneſs and awe, 'I do know you, and I know your virtue now; I will leave you: believe me I am ſorry for the terror I have put you into; grant me a moment's audience to-morrow; I have ſomething to ſay to you that will convince you I am deſirous of meriting your pardon.'

He then bowed reſpectfully, and, unlocking the door, went down ſtairs; Henrietta all the time keeping cloſe to the window, that ſhe might be ready to call for help, if he ſhewed any deſign of ſtaying in her apartment; nor till ſhe heard him enter his own, and ſhut the door after him, durſt ſhe venture from her poſt to ſecure her door, which ſhe did with the utmoſt precipitation, making it as faſt as ſhe could; and then ſhutting her window, for her cries had not been heard, ſhe paſſed the night in a chair, reſolving not to go to bed any more in that houſe.

The dangers ſhe was expoſed to, made her almoſt repent of having fled from her aunt's tyranny; and mortified as ſhe was by ſuch ſhocking inſults, ſhe thought it would have been a leſs misfortune to be the wife of Sir Iſaac Darby, or the inmate of a gloomy convent, than the avowed object of a libertine's paſſion.

Surpriſed as ſhe was that my lord knew her name, and anxious to know by what means he had made the diſcovery, yet it never once occurred to her that Miſs Woodby had betrayed her. Her generous mind was incapable of ſuggeſting ſuch a ſuſpicion, and ſhe was even doubtful whether Mrs. Eccles was privy to his inſolent attempt: ſo difficult it is for innocence to fathom the depths of guilt.

Amidſt the melancholy reflections which her ſituation gave riſe to, ſhe drew ſome conſolation from Mr. Bale's friendly concern for her. She reſolved to go to him in the morning, and claim his promiſe of ſettling her immediately with one of his father's friends, yet without revealing the mortifying treatment ſhe had been expoſed to, and from which ſhe had extricated herſelf: for true virtue bluſhes to own its conqueſts, becauſe thoſe conqueſts are proofs of its having been attempted. Theſe various thoughts kept her waking the whole night; but towards morning ſhe fell into a ſlumber, from which ſhe was rouſed by a loud knocking at her chamber door. She roſe inſtantly from her chair, where ſhe had paſt the night; and perceiving the day was far advanced, opened the door, and let in her landlady; who excuſed herſelf for diſturbing her, being apprehenſive, ſhe ſaid, that ſhe was ill, from her continuing ſo long in her chamber.

'It would not be ſurpriſing,' ſaid Henrietta cooly, 'if I ſhould be ill, conſidering the fright I was in laſt night. Did you not hear me cry out, Mrs. Eccles?'

'Dear heart,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles ſmiling, hear you cry out! why what was the matter? ſome groundleſs apprehenſions of thieves, I ſuppoſe; but there is no danger: my houſe has very good faſtenings; I have lain in it many a night by myſelf, I aſſure you.'

'That may be,' ſaid Miſs Courteney; 'but I am reſolved never to lie in it another night; it would be well, Mrs. Eccles, if you were a little more cautious to whom you let your lodgings: rakes are dangerous company.'

'I hope I have no ſuch perſons in my houſe,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles. 'I have been inſulted in your houſe,' ſaid Henrietta, 'which obliges me to haſten my depar-

ture from it; pray let your maid get me a coach to the door.'

'Why, you are not going, Madam, are you?' ſaid Mrs. Eccles pertly. 'Not immediately,' replied Miſs Courteney, 'but I ſhall go to-day; at preſent I am going out upon buſineſs.'

'And why pray will you go to-day, Madam?' ſaid Mrs. Eccles, ſtill more ſaucily. 'Becauſe,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, who did not like the accent in which ſhe ſpoke, 'I do not chooſe to ſtay in a houſe where I am liable to be inſulted.'

'I hope you intend to caſt no aſperſions upon my character, Madam,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles: 'I would have you to know that I value my character as much as any body, though I am not ſo prudiſh as ſome folks.'

'Will you order your maid to get me a coach?' ſaid Henrietta, who was extremely apprehenſive of ſome farther rudeneſs from this woman; 'I am in haſte.'

'Inſulted, indeed!' repeated Mrs. Eccles: 'fine airs for folks to give themſelves, when no-body knows who they are, or what they are.' Henrietta, finding that her inſolence increaſed, told her ſhe would go down herſelf, and ſend the maid for a coach, and was paſſing by her for that purpoſe; but Mrs. Eccles placed herſelf between her and the door. 'No, no, my fine ſcrupulous young lady,' ſays ſhe, 'you ſhall not ſtir, I aſſure you.'

'Sure,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, trembling, yet endeavouring to ſeem very courageous, 'you will not dare to detain me!' 'Indeed but I will,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles, 'till I am paid; I know nothing of you but your airs and affectation; I may never ſee you again perhaps.' The young lady immediately pulled out her purſe, bluſhing at the new indignity that was offered her; and taking out a guinea, 'I agreed with you, Mrs. Eccles,' ſaid ſhe, 'for a guinea a week: here is a guinea for you, and now am I at liberty to go out?'

'Perhaps not,' ſaid Mrs. Eccles; 'you have aſperſed me with ſcandalous reflections, and I can tell you, Madam, I will have ſatisfaction.' 'Lord bleſs me,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, who was now frighted out of her

ſeeming courage, 'what ſhall I do! what will become of me!'

This exclamation immediately brought up his lordſhip, who had been liſtening at the door of his apartment, and heard part of what had paſt.

As ſoon as Henrietta ſaw him, her terror increaſed, not doubting but he came as an auxiliary to her landlady; but the contemptuous look he gave Mrs. Eccles, removed her apprehenſions.

'What do you mean?' ſaid he, in an angry tone, 'by treating this young lady in ſuch a manner. Miſs Benſon do not be uneaſy: if you are going, you ſhall meet with no hindrance; I aſk your pardon for being the cauſe of your fright laſt night; I do aſſure you I am ſincerely ſorry for it.'

'I hope you are, my lord,' ſaid Miſs Courteney: 'and I thank you for this ſeaſonable interpoſition.' Saying this, ſhe haſtened down ſtairs, and diſpatched the maid for a coach; while ſhe ſtepped into the milliner's parlour to ſettle her dreſs a little, and to put on her hat and cloak, which ſhe had brought down in her hand.

CHAP. XII.

In which the Hiſtory goes forward.

HENRIETTA was waiting impatiently for the coach, when the young nobleman entered the room; 'you are going then, Miſs?' ſaid he, ſighing: 'I waited at home all this morning for an opportunity of ſeeing you, that I might recommend ſuch a reſolution, as I find your prudence has ſuggeſted to you. Mrs. Eccles is not a proper woman for you to lodge with, and this I believe her behaviour to you to-day has convinced you of; had ſhe not made the diſcovery to you herſelf, I ſhould have done it, partly to repair the affront I have been ſo unhappy to offer you, and partly to ſecure you againſt the like, by letting you know that you are in the houſe of a woman of doubtful character.'

This language bore the marks of ſo much prudence and ſincerity, that Henrietta could not help being affect-

ed with it; and accordingly ſhe expreſſed a grateful ſenſe of his concern for her.

'I have ſomething elſe to ſay to you,' ſaid he, 'which poſſibly will ſurpriſe you more; but it is neceſſary you ſhould know it, to avoid further inconveniences, by a miſplaced confidence: it was your friend Miſs Woodby that informed me of your true name and circumſtances. I ſee you are ſhocked: ſhe has indeed betrayed you, but leſs from malice I believe than folly. I am maſter of your ſecret, Miſs Courteney, ſaid he, ſpeaking lower, and taking her hand; 'but you may depend upon it, I ſhall make no other uſe of it, but to ſerve you in whatever way you ſhall direct; command my utmoſt ſervices; deareſt creature, diſpoſe of me, my life, and fortune: never did I feel a real paſſion for any of your ſex before.'

'My lord,' interrupted Miſs Courteney, concerned to find him again upon this ſtrain, which deſtroyed the hope of his diſintereſtedneſs; 'ſince you know my ſituation, you muſt alſo know that ſuch diſcourſe is extremely embarraſſing to me. I am at preſent under the diſpleaſure of my friends, without whoſe conſent I will never admit of an addreſs of this kind.' She looked at him here; and obſerving him in ſome confuſion, for indeed his intentions were not of that ſort that could be communicated to her friends, ſhe bluſhed at the humiliating idea that apparent confuſion raiſed in her mind; but recovering herſelf,

'I am contented, ſaid ſhe, that your lordſhip ſhould know my name, ſince chance has ordered it ſo, and I depend upon your honour not to mention me. I muſt alſo acknowledge myſelf obliged to you for the diſcovery you have made of Miſs Woodby's treachery; it is a very uſeful diſcovery, for otherwiſe I ſhould ſtill have confided in her, and been again betrayed.' His lordſhip was going to reply with great earneſtneſs, when the maid came in, and informed Miſs Courteney that a coach was at the door.

'You are going then?' ſaid he, with a melancholy look; but, 'ere he could proceed, Mrs. Eccles entered,

and, with a countenance and voice altered to great obsequiousness, told Henrietta, that the gentleman who had been there yesterday, enquired for her. 'O how lucky is this!' exclaimed Miss Courteney: let him be shewn up stairs, I'll wait on him.' The milliner having withdrawn, the young lord catched hold of Henrietta's hand as she was leaving the room,

'And can you be so cruel, said he, to quit me thus without giving me the least hope?' 'Pray, my lord,' said Miss Courteney, drawing her hand from him with an air disdainful enough, 'no more of this idle gallantry.'

'Who is this gentleman that enquires for you?' said he, with a beseeching air.

'My lord,' replied Miss Courteney, 'the gentleman is my friend.' 'Say rather your lover,' said he; 'oh! what joy you discovered when you heard he was come.' 'I had reason for being rejoiced, interrupted she, he is my guardian, who has the care of my affairs.' 'Your guardian, repeated his lordship, may I not know his name?'

'He is the guardian of my person rather than my fortune,' said Henrietta; 'the poor trifle that I can call my own does not deserve the name of fortune—It is my unhappiness,' added she, sighing, 'to be in a situation that exposes me to unworthy suspicions, and subjects me to humiliating explanations. You know my name, my lord, therefore you may know the name of the person, under whose protection I shall be for the future; Mr. Bale is my guardian, he is a considerable merchant in the city.'

'Enough,' cried the lover, kissing her hand in a rapture, while she was struggling to be gone from him, 'I know him—Say only,' pursued he, still endeavouring to detain her, 'that you will permit me to see you again.' 'Excuse me, my lord,' said Henrietta, breaking from him, 'I cannot grant your request; though I must repeat the one I made to you, take no notice of your having met with me, and suffer me to be obliged to you for your secrecy.'

'O! doubt me not,' ſaid he, following her to the ſtairs, and taking a paſſionate leave of her with his eyes, 'I will obey you.'

Henrietta anſwered no otherwiſe than by a courteſy, and haſtened up to Mr. Bale, wondering at this unexpected viſit, and indulging a flattering hope that his father was returned.

Mr. Bale met her as ſhe entered the room, and, bowing more gravely than uſual, told her, that he was afraid he kept her at home, being informed by her landlady that ſhe was juſt going out.

'I was going out,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, 'but it was to you.' 'Indeed!' replied he, with a ſmile of pleaſure that beamed over his countenance, 'have you any new commands for me? I am glad I came ſo ſeaſonably.'

'But tell me, Sir,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, 'is my worthy guardian come back; have you any news for me? this viſit was unexpected.'

The young merchant was a little diſconcerted at this queſtion; for he had reaſons which he did not care to own for viſiting her ſo ſoon again: he had a glimpſe of the young lord, as he paſſed by the parlour the day before; he ſaw him come out of the houſe; obſerved that he followed him, and looked at him with an inquiſitive eye—He began to ſuſpect that this gay gentleman had ſome deſign upon Miſs Courteney, and that ſhe might have an inclination for him. He therefore reſolved to take her immediately out of his way, and had already ſecured to her a ſafe retreat.

'I wiſh, ſaid he, that I had any better news to bring you, than that I have provided you a lodging with the wife of one of my father's factors; ſhe is a ſenſible woman, and will treat you with great reſpect.—I am perſuaded my father will be pleaſed to find you there.' 'And I am ready,' ſaid Henrietta, eagerly, 'to go immediately; for my intended viſit to you to-day was to preſs you to find ſome ſuitable lodging for me—I don't know the perſon with whom I am at preſent; and ſhe has no woman-lodger in the houſe but myſelf.'

'You have a great deal of prudence, Miſs,' ſaid Mr. Bale, who was indeed exceſſively pleaſed to find her ſo deſirous of going; 'I fancy you can ſoon ſettle with your landlady; and we will make uſe of that hackney-coach which ſtands at the door, and which you ſent for it ſeems.' 'I have ſettled already with her,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, 'and this ſmall parcel you ſee will be all my luggage, except the money you paid me yeſterday,' added ſhe, ſmiling, and unlocking her deſk to take it out.

Mr. Bale very politely took up her little parcel, and carried it down ſtairs. Mean time Miſs Courteney was ſo much miſtreſs of her reſentment as to take a civil leave of Mrs. Eccles; and Mr. Bale, who was waiting for her at the door, handed her into the coach, and came in himſelf, after he had given the man directions where to drive.

The young nobleman, who was ſtanding at one of his windows, ſaw her depart with great uneaſineſs. She was now in the hands of her guardian, and conſequently his approaches would be more difficult; but youth and fortune think every thing attainable. His paſſion for Henrietta was violent enough to make him run any hazard to obtain her on any terms but marriage. Nothing is more eaſy than for love to conquer reaſon; its great triumph is when it is victorious over intereſt. The earl of ———, father to this young lord, was negotiating a match for him with a young lady of very great fortune, the daughter of an eminent packer in the city. The noble youth, ſtimulated by fifty thouſand pounds, had pleaded his paſſion with ſuch ſucceſs, that the lady preferred him to all his titled rivals, and he had a great many, from the baronet up to the duke. The honeſt packer, ſacrificing his ambition to his daughter's inclinations, choſe rather to let her follow her taſte and be only a counteſs, than become father-in-law to a duke by croſſing it: an admirable inſtance of humility it muſt be confeſſed, and ſcarce to be equalled but by that of the noblemen, who, with ſuch generous contempt of heredi-

tary honours, ſolicited his alliance; but, happily for the reformation of manners, ſuch inſtances are not now very rare.

This marriage therefore being in great forwardneſs, it behoved the young lord to be cautious in proſecuting his ſcheme upon Miſs Courteney. He was convinced ſhe was virtuous; and that the only way to undermine that virtue, was to make himſelf ſure of her heart, before he diſcovered that his repentance was but feigned, and his intentions not honourable; when the paſſion ſhe had for him would excuſe, if not juſtify, an attempt that paſſion forced him to make; firmly depending on the poet's maxim, that, *the faults of love by love are juſtified.*

The great point was to bring her to admit of his addreſſes without the knowledge of her friends, for which he could urge reaſons ſufficient; and when that point was gained, he might ſecurely reckon upon ſucceſs. For a young woman who engages in a private correſpondence of that kind, deprives herſelf of the ſuggeſtions of prudence, the caution of experience, the counſels of wiſdom, and the reſtraint of authority; her whole conduct is then influenced by the paſſion with which ſhe is actuated, which is at once her impulſe and her guide.

Our lover, having given ſome ſighs to the departure of his miſtreſs, comforted himſelf in the hope of ſeeing her ſoon, with advantage to his paſſion, ſince he had in ſome degree ſecured her confidence by the diſintereſted advice he had given her with regard to Mrs. Eccles; and having now no further occaſion for the apartment he had hired in that houſe, he quitted it immediately, not without diſcovering in his behaviour to her at parting ſome part of that contempt, which even the greateſt libertines feel for ſuch as aſſiſt their criminal deſigns.

Mean time Henrietta, extremely pleaſed with the care and attention of her new guardian, was by him conducted to a large well furniſhed houſe in the city, and received with great reſpect by the miſtreſs of it, who was a middle-aged woman, with a benevolent aſpect and an eaſy agreeable behaviour.

'Mrs. Willis,' ſaid Mr. Bale, leading in Miſs Courte-

ney, 'permit me to introduce you to this young lady, my father's ward, and at preſent under my care: I hope you will make every thing agreeable to her during the time ſhe ſtays with you. Miſs Benſon, added he, I need not give Mrs. Willis any other recommendation to you, than that ſhe is a friend of my father's, and very much eſteemed by him.'

Henrietta, though in ſome confuſion at being introduced under a feigned name to a friend of Mr. Bale's, ſaluted her with a graceful air, and replied to the compliments ſhe made her with great politeneſs; but took the firſt opportunity of her withdrawing, to aſk Mr. Bale, why he concealed her true name from a friend of his father's?

Mr. Bale aſked her pardon for not having conſulted her before on that ſubject; but ſaid, that by ſtill continuing the name of Benſon, ſhe would be more ſecure from the ſearch her aunt might make for her.

Alas! Sir,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, 'I am afraid my aunt is too much offended to be at any pains to find me out—I am more apprehenſive of the contrivances of Mr. Danvers; he no doubt has ſtrong reaſons for putting her upon ſuch harſh meaſures. While I was alone and unprotected, I thought it neceſſary to conceal myſelf, ſince it was not impoſſible but I might have been forced away; but I am ſure no ſuch attempt will be made, when it is known that I am under my guardian's protection. I think therefore this gentlewoman ought to be acquainted with my name. I would avoid as much as poſſible the appearance of myſtery. I ſhall never recollect, without pain, the ſad neceſſity that has reduced me to it.'

'It will not be prudent,' ſaid Mr. Bale, 'to alter our meaſures now: I have called you Miſs Benſon; the diſcovery of your true name will come with more propriety from my father, when he has accommodated matters between your aunt and you: we may expect a letter from him in a day or two, in which he will probably fix the time of his return. In the mean while I hope you will

find yourſelf agreeably ſituated here—I have agreed for your board and lodging.'

'At a moderate price, I hope,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, 'my circumſtances do not entitle me to great expence.' 'I have taken care of that,' ſaid Mr. Bale. Mrs. Willis coming in that moment, he recommended Miſs Courteney to her care, promiſing, when he heard from his father, to come immediately with the news. He then took his leave, and Mrs. Willis conducted her fair lodger to another parlour, where the cloth was laid for dinner, and introduced two pretty children to her, a boy and a girl, with whom the young lady was extremely pleaſed.

There was in the countenance of this woman ſo much ſweetneſs and complacency, and ſuch an unaffected politeneſs in her behaviour, that Henrietta found herſelf inſenſibly diſpoſed to like her, and was pleaſed to hear her fall naturally into an account of herſelf with a frankneſs and ſimplicity that denoted the goodneſs of her heart.

From what ſhe ſaid, Miſs Courteney collected that ſhe had made a marriage of choice rather than of prudence, and that induſtry had ſupplied the place of fortune. She found ſhe was under great obligations to the elder Mr. Bale, who had ſettled her huſband in an advantageous way at Leghorn, where he acted as his factor, and had enabled her to furniſh that large houſe, in a very genteel manner, for the reception of ſuch merchants as came from abroad, and were by him recommended to lodge with her. Her extreme tenderneſs for her huſband, which had hurried her to Leghorn upon hearing that he was ill, that ſhe might have the ſatisfaction of attending him herſelf, and her anxiety for her children, which brought her back as ſoon as he was recovered, that ſhe might re-aſſume her care of them, were qualities which won her the eſteem of Miſs Courteney. She marked with what becoming reſerve ſhe ſlightly touched upon her family and connections, which were very genteel, and by which Henrietta accounted for the eaſy politeneſs of her manners and behaviour, ſo ſeldom found in perſons of her rank.

The young lady then turned the diſcourſe upon her guardian's ſon, whoſe character ſhe was deſirous of being acquainted with. Mrs. Willis told her, that he was a ſober diligent young man, and tho' the heir of immenſe riches, yet applied himſelf to buſineſs with as much induſtry as if he had had his fortune to make: that he had for ſeveral years tranſacted his father's buſineſs in Holland, from whence he was but lately returned; and that he traded largely for himſelf.

'Before I went to Leghorn, added ſhe, there was ſome talk of his being to be married to the daughter of a very rich citizen; but ſince my return, which was about a week ago, I have heard nothing of it, not having ſeen Mr. Bale till the day that he came to tell me I ſhould be ſo happy as to have you, Madam, for my lodger.'

Miſs Courteney having paſſed this day more agreeably than ſhe had done any ſince ſhe had left her aunt, was at night conducted by Mrs. Willis to a genteel apartment, conſiſting of a bed-chamber and dreſſing-room. She diſmiſſed the maid whom Mrs. Willis ordered to attend and undreſs her; and being greatly fatigued for want of reſt the preceding night, loſt all her cares, her anxieties, and reſentments, in the ſweet oblivion of a calm and uninterrupted ſleep.

CHAP. XIII.

The Hiſtory ſtill advances.

HENRIETTA, though an early riſer, and though ſhe roſe next morning earlier than uſual, yet found, upon her going down, Mrs. Willis had waited breakfaſt for her ſome time.

As ſoon as the tea-equipage was removed, ſhe retired to leave Mrs. Willis at liberty to go about her domeſtic affairs; and, when alone, was again aſſaulted with all thoſe cruel reflections which had almoſt inceſſantly filled her mind ſince her flight from her aunt. Among theſe, Miſs Woodby's treachery ſuggeſted none of the leaſt painful: ſhe was aſhamed of her credulity, of her ill-placed confidence; indignation for the ſhocking treat-

ment ſhe had met with from her ſucceeded. She was upon the point of ſitting down to write to her, and to expreſs the deepeſt reſentment of her malice and treachery; when, recollecting the extreme levity of that young woman's temper, her ridiculous affectation, her folly, and inſenſibility, ſhe thought it would ill become her to make ſerious remonſtrances to one who only merited contempt; that by taking no further notice of her, that contempt would be beſt expreſſed, and her own conſciouſneſs of the part ſhe had acted would account for it.

While ſhe was thus ruminating, Mrs. Willis's maid introduced two porters bringing in a large trunk to her apartment. They delivered her the key ſealed up, and a letter from Mr. Bale, in which he informed her, he would wait on her that afternoon.

She opened the trunk trembling; it contained all her cloaths, linen, and all the trinkets her aunt had given her. She ſearched eagerly in it to ſee if there was a letter for her; but finding none, ſhe threw herſelf into a chair, and burſt into a flood of tears.

While her aunt retained her cloaths, ſhe had formed a feeble hope that ſhe was anxious for her return, and would facilitate it, by aſſuring Mr. Bale, that ſhe would no more preſs her to the hated marriage, nor think of confining her in a convent: but now what could ſhe conclude, but that ſhe had abandoned her for ever, and that a reconciliation was not to be expected. The moſt gloomy proſpects offered themſelves to her view, poverty, dependence, neglect; but what was worſe than all, the loſs perhaps of reputation. How ſhould ſhe be able to excuſe herſelf to the world for her late action? the world which judges actions only by their ſucceſs: and when it beheld her unhappy and reduced to indigence, would not fail to conclude her guilty.

In theſe melancholy apprehenſions did ſhe wear away the hours till ſummoned to dinner by Mrs. Willis, who, with tender concern, perceived that ſhe was afflicted, but would not diſcover that ſhe perceived it; and uſed her utmoſt endeavours to amuſe her, yet without any ap-

parent ſolicitude, leſt it ſhould alarm her ſenſibility with a fear that her uneaſineſs was obſerved.

Mr. Bale came according to his promiſe in the afternoon: his arrival gave almoſt as much ſatisfaction to Mrs. Willis, as to her fair anxious lodger, from a hope that it would produce ſome comfort to her. The young merchant inſtantly diſcovered that Henrietta had been weeping; and, as ſoon as Mrs. Willis withdrew, he tenderly approached her, and taking her hand, aſked her if any thing new had happened to give her diſturbance? Henrietta replied with a haſty queſtion, 'Have you any meſſage for me from my aunt, Sir?'

'I cannot ſay I have a meſſage for you, Miſs,' anſwered Mr. Bale; 'your aunt has indeed wrote to me.' 'May I not ſee her letter?' aſked Miſs Courteney again, eagerly. 'To be ſure,' ſaid he, taking it out of his pocket, and preſenting it to her, 'I wiſh it was conceived in more favourable terms.' Miſs Courteney read it trembling, and found it as follows:

'SIR,

'I have given directions that every thing which belongs to that unhappy girl my niece ſhould be ſent to you, that if you know where ſhe is, they may be conveyed to her. She has, by her ſcandalouſly running away from me, ruined her own character, and brought aſperſions upon mine; ſince even thoſe who condemn her moſt, will likewiſe blame me, as if I had acted unkindly towards her.

'May the loſs of my affection be the leaſt of her misfortunes; though the worſt that can poſſibly happen are likely to be the puniſhment of her ingratitude and folly.'

Henrietta returned the letter to Mr. Bale with a ſigh. 'I have indeed, ſaid ſhe, irrecoverably loſt her affection: but, Sir, it is fit my aunt ſhould know where I am, and that I ſolicited your protection as ſoon as I could. This will preſerve me from ſome of thoſe unfavourable ſuſpicions which ſhe mentions ſo ſeverely. I will write to her inſtantly.'

'Oh! no, by no means,' ſaid Mr. Bale, 'I think it will be beſt for me to make a viſit to lady Meadows, and

tell her, that you are under my care, and that I have placed you here.'

'And will you take the trouble to go to Windſor, Sir,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, extremely delighted with this expedient. 'I would go any where,' ſaid Mr. Bale, 'to ſerve you. Pray make yourſelf eaſy.'

'I ſhall be eaſier,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, 'when my aunt knows that this ſcandalous run-away is under proper protection, and is accountable for all her actions to your father. Perhaps ſhe may relent when ſhe is convinced I am not ſo indiſcreet as ſhe imagined, and that I had no other motive for leaving her but the fear of being confined in a convent. If you find my aunt abſolutely reſolved not to be reconciled to me, I muſt then conſider how to diſpoſe of myſelf in a way more ſuitable to my circumſtances.'

'Remember, Miſs,' ſaid Mr. Bale, with ſome emotion, 'that you are under my care—I hope you will take no reſolutions without acquainting me.' 'No, certainly,' replied Henrietta—'but, Sir, I have no fortune; I am lodged, attended, and treated, as if I had a very conſiderable one. This expence I ſhall not be willing to ſupport a great while longer, it will break in too much upon that trifling ſum, which was put into your father's hands, for my brother's uſe as well as mine. Heaven knows, ſaid ſhe, ſighing, whether he is alive; if he is, he will probably need it; if he is not, it will go but a very little way in ſupporting me in the manner in which I now live.'

While Henrietta was ſpeaking in this manner, Mr. Bale ſeemed ready to interrupt her ſeveral times, but checked himſelf as if upon better recollection; when ſhe was ſilent, he walked about the room, muſing; then ſuddenly turning towards her,

'Theſe conſiderations, Miſs, ſaid he, ought at leaſt to be poſtponed till my father's return, and I think you may rely upon his prudence: he will certainly take care that your expences ſhall not exceed your income; in

placing you here, I have done what I thought would be agreeable to him.'

Henrietta, obferving that he was in fome confufion, was concerned that fhe had fpoke fo freely, being apprehenfive that he underftood what fhe had faid as a diftruft of his prudence. She therefore told him, that if he found her aunt implacable, fhe would be extremely well fatisfied to continue with Mrs. Willis as long as Mr. Bale fhould think it neceffary.

This affurance fatisfied the young merchant, who left her with a promife to fee lady Meadows the next day, and to wait on her as foon as poffible, with an account of the fuccefs of his vifit.

She paffed this interval in a ftate of anxiety and fufpence, that doubled every hour. As foon as fhe faw Mr. Bale again, fhe endeavoured to read in his countenance, before he fpoke, the news he had brought her.

'Well, Mifs, faid he, I have feen your aunt.' He paufed; and Henrietta, in a faltering accent, begged him to tell her in one word, whether he had fucceeded or not?

'Indeed, I have not, faid he, lady Meadows feems refolved never to forgive you for running away from her; but don't defpair, my father may have more weight with her.' 'It is at leaft fome comfort, faid fhe, that fhe knows I am under your protection.' 'I have a letter from my father,' faid Mr. Bale, 'he has got the gout in his right hand; he dictated it to one of his clerks, and therefore fpeaks with referve of you. He defires me to tell you, that he hopes to be in London in three weeks at fartheft, when he will ufe his utmoft endeavours to reconcile you to your aunt; and, in the mean time, recommends you moft affectionately to my care.'

This account of her guardian's kind concern for her, gave fome relief to the depreffed fpirits of Mifs Courteney, who, although fhe had not flattered herfelf with any hope from the young merchant's mediation with her aunt, was as much fhocked at the confirmation of her continued difpleafure, as if fhe had not expected it.

However, ſhe expreſſed a grateful ſenſe of his ſervices, and diſpoſed herſelf to wait with patience for the arrival of Mr. Bale, who alone could determine her deſtiny.

CHAP. XIV.

Containing ſeveral myſterious Circumſtances.

HENRIETTA had been about a fortnight in the houſe of Mrs. Willis, whoſe good ſenſe and polite behaviour had entirely won her eſteem, when, on a ſudden, ſhe became reſerved and thoughtful, and often failed in thoſe little attentions which mark reſpect, and an extreme willingneſs to oblige. She, who had avoided the leaſt appearance of curioſity to know more of her affairs than what ſhe pleaſed to diſcloſe, now aſked queſtions with an inquiſitive air, and ſeemed to ſeek for occaſions of collecting a fuller knowledge of her from her converſation.

Henrietta had inſiſted upon her being made acquainted with her true name and circumſtances, from the time that Mr. Bale had acknowledged to her aunt that ſhe was under his care, which had produced no other alteration in Mrs. Willis than rather an increaſe of reſpect towards her, which ſhe conceived due to her birth.

The young lady, whoſe extreme ſenſibility was not the leaſt of her misfortunes, obſerved her increaſing coldneſs, and ſuffered great uneaſineſs. She had willingly indulged a tenderneſs and eſteem for her; and was concerned to find from her altered behaviour, that either ſhe had failed in her endeavours to acquire the friendſhip of Mrs. Willis, or that the woman whom ſhe had conceived ſo good an opinion of, was in reality not deſerving of hers.

However, ſhe was determined not to let Mr. Bale perceive that ſhe was diſſatisfied with her behaviour; and ſhe continued to live with her in the ſame eaſy manner as formerly, notwithſtanding the coldneſs and conſtraint with which ſhe was now treated.

Mr. Bale ſcarce ever failed to call and ſee her once a day; but one day he returned about an hour after he had been with her, and told her he had juſt received letters from his father, in which he acquainted him that

Mrs. Willis would in a few days have ſeveral foreign merchants in her houſe, whom he had recommended to lodge with her; and that, his ſtay in Holland being protracted for ſome time longer, he thought it would not be proper for Miſs Courteney to reſide with Mrs. Willis till his return, as her houſe would be full of men.

'My father' added Mr. Bale, 'deſires me to aſk you, Miſs, whether you have any objection to go into the country for a few weeks. He has a diſtant relation, a widow, who lives at Hampſtead, with whom he ſays he will be glad to find you at his return; be begs you will excuſe his not writing to you, having the gout ſtill in his hand, and deſires me to aſſure you of his tendereſt concern for your welfare.'

A week before, Henrietta would have thought it a misfortune to have left Mrs. Willis to go into any other lodging; but ſhe was ſo piqued by her behaviour, that ſhe heard this news without any uneaſineſs, and told Mr. Bale ſhe would implicitly follow her guardian's directions.

He ſaid he would conduct her to his couſin's himſelf; and took leave of her, after he had deſired her to be ready for her little journey the next day.

Mrs. Willis came up to her apartment ſoon after Mr. Bale went away. 'I hear I am ſoon to loſe you, Miſs,' ſaid ſhe, entering. 'Yes,' replied Miſs Courteney cooly, 'ſuch is my guardian's pleaſure; but,' added ſhe ſmiling, 'you will not miſs me; you will have other company.' 'Other company!' repeated Mrs. Willis.

'Mr. Bale tells me,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, 'that your houſe will be full ſoon; ſome gentlemen recommended by his father will be here.'

'It is ſtrange,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, 'that I ſhould know nothing of it; have you had a letter from your guardian, Miſs?'

'No,' replied Miſs Courteney; but his ſon has heard from him—But,' purſued ſhe, after a little pauſe, 'it is ſtrange, as you ſay, that you ſhould not know you are to have new lodgers.'

Mrs. Willis looked at her attentively, as ſhe ſpoke theſe words, 'May I aſk you, Miſs,' ſaid ſhe, 'the cauſe of your ſudden removal?'

'I know of none,' replied Miſs Courteney; 'but that, my guardian thinks it will not be proper for me to ſtay among ſo many gentlemen as will ſhortly be your lodgers.'

'I wiſh there had been a better reaſon than that,' ſaid Mrs. Willis; 'for I am very ſure I am to have no lodgers recommended by the elder Mr. Bale, otherwiſe I ſhould have known it.'

'Has not his ſon told you ſo?' aſked Miſs Courteney, in great confuſion of thought.

'He told me nothing,' replied Mrs. Willis, 'but that you are to leave me to-morrow.'

'Lord bleſs me,' cried the young lady, in great emotion, 'what can this mean!'

'Suffer me,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, looking on her with tenderneſs and concern, 'to aſk you a few queſtions: when you know my motives, I am ſure you will not think that it is an impertinent curioſity which make me take this liberty, but my anxiety for you.'

'Dear madam,' interrupted Miſs Courteney, aſk me what you pleaſe: you alarm me exceſſively.'

'I would not alarm you,' ſaid Mrs. Willis; 'but I will own to you that I have fears, nay more, that I have had doubts; but I ſee I have been to blame with regard to the latter: has Mr. Bale ſhewn you his father's letters, Miſs?'

'Shewn them to me!' repeated Henrietta, 'no—but ſure—dear Mrs. Willis explain yourſelf—I am ready to ſink with the apprehenſions you have raiſed in my mind.'

'Compoſe yourſelf, my dear,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, drawing her chair nearer to her, and taking her hand tenderly. 'I mean you well; be aſſured I do: and now I will tell you all that has been on my mind for ſeveral days paſt. Never did I imagine that I ſhould entertain unfavourable ſuſpicions of the ſon of my benefactor; but indeed, my dear Miſs, 'I am afraid he has not acted ingenuouſly by you.'

That moment a loud knocking at the door interrupted Mrs. Willis. She ſtarted from her chair, 'Who can this be?' ſaid ſhe in ſome ſurpriſe; 'I will go and ſee.' She ran haſtily out of the room; but returning again inſtantly, 'Poſſibly,' ſaid ſhe, 'it may be Mr. Bale: remember, Miſs, that it is my advice to you not to leave my houſe, if he ſhould deſire you, at leaſt till you have heard what I have to ſay.'

She uttered theſe words with extreme earneſtneſs and concern, and went immediately down ſtairs, leaving Henrietta in an agony of doubt, anxiety, and aſtoniſhment.

Her ſurpriſe kept her motionleſs in her chair, till ſhe was rouſed by the voice of a woman upon the ſtairs that led to her apartment, whom ſhe heard ſay, with great haughtineſs of accent, 'No, there is no occaſion for that ceremony; I ſhall go in without introduction, I aſſure you.'

She ſuddenly ſtarted from her chair, and was going towards the door, when ſhe ſaw it flung open with ſome violence, and a lady of a very diſagreeably figure but richly dreſſed, and in the utmoſt extremity of the faſhion, appear at the entrance.

Miſs Courteney, recovering a little from her ſurpriſe, looked at the lady, in order to recollect whether ſhe had ever ſeen her before; but being wholly unacquainted with her features, and obſerving that ſhe ſtood ſtill and gazed at her without ſpeaking, ſhe concluded the viſit could not be deſigned for her.

'I fancy, Madam,' ſaid ſhe, approaching her, 'you are miſtaken; I am not the perſon you ſeek.'

'No, *Madam*,' returned the lady with an emphaſis, 'I am not miſtaken;' then throwing herſelf haughtily into a chair, 'I ſhall not aſk you leave,' ſaid ſhe, with a malignant ſmile, to ſit down in this apartment; I may take that liberty with what belongs to Mr. Bale.—Do you know me pray, *Madam*.'

'Not I, truly,' replied Miſs Courteney, indignation at this inſolent treatment having baniſhed her former terror and ſurpriſe, and ſeating herſelf with a careleſs air,

juſt oppoſite to her, 'Pray let me know what is your buſineſs with me,' ſaid ſhe.

'Pert creature!' ſaid the ſtranger, affecting contempt, while her lips quivered with rage, and her whole frame ſeemed convulſed with the violence of her emotions: 'What! you would have me underſtand you to be a woman of fortune, would you not?—Upon my word,' ſaid ſhe, looking round her, 'this is a very handſome apartment. Your dreſſing-room, forſooth! You have your forms, no doubt, and receive company in your dreſſing-room in a morning. A very genteel diſhabille, too; and your face varniſhed over ſo nicely!—Who would not conclude that white and red to be natural?'

'You are come here to inſult me, I find,' ſaid Henrietta, her fine face glowing with indignation.—'I cannot imagine what cauſe I have given you for this ſtrange rudeneſs. I never, as I can remember, ever ſaw you before; and inſiſt upon your quitting my apartment. You can have no buſineſs with me, I am ſure.'

'Indeed but I have, minx,' ſaid the ſtranger, with the pale rage of a fury; 'and my buſineſs is to turn you out of this apartment: my fortune ſhall not be waſted in ſupporting ſuch wretches.'

'Your fortune!' cried Miſs Courteney, in aſtoniſhment: 'What have I to do with you, or your fortune? —Who are you?'

'This moment Mrs. Willis entered the room; 'Excuſe me, ladies,' ſaid ſhe; 'I heard high words between you.'

'Ladies!' interrupted the ſtranger: 'how dare you, woman, join me with ſuch a creature?—What buſineſs have you to intrude?

'Madam,' replied Mrs. Willis, 'I came to inform this young lady, my boarder, who you are: ſhe does not know you.—Miſs, this is young Mr. Bale's lady.'

'What!' cried Henrietta, in the utmoſt aſtoniſhment, 'is Mr. Bale married?'

'Oh!—you are ſurpriſed then,' ſaid the lady, with a ſneer: 'diſappointed too, perhaps.—You had the confidence, I ſuppoſe, to think he would have married you

one of theſe days!—Tell me, you wicked thing, did he ever give you ſuch hopes?—Oh, I could tear his eyes out!' ſaid ſhe, riſing, and walking about the room like one frantic, while the enormous length of her gown ſwept the room, like the train of a tragedy-queen.—'A wretch, to uſe me thus! me, who has brought him ſuch a fortune! But I'll be revenged: he ſhall never have a quiet moment. I'll make him know what it is to ſlight a woman of virtue.'

All this time Henrietta continued ſilent, rooted in her chair, and with difficulty reſtrained the anguiſh of her heart from riſing to her eyes, leſt this outrageous woman of virtue ſhould exult in her diſtreſs, yet ſhe ſaw that ſhe was betrayed; that Mr. Bale had acted weakly, if not baſely: her reputation was ruined, yet ſhe would not ſtoop ſo low as to enter into any juſtification of herſelf to a woman who had treated her ſo cruelly, upon a bare ſuſpicion. The pride of affronted virtue came to her aid, againſt that torrent of overwhelming grief, which had for ſome moments abſorbed all her faculties: ſhe roſe from her chair, and approaching Mrs. Bale,

'The error you are in,' ſaid ſhe, 'would have moved my compaſſion, had you treated me with leſs inſolence. I ſcorn to undeceive you.—Go, learn from your huſband who I am: and bluſh, if you can, for the injurious language you have given a perſon as much your ſuperior by birth, as in that virtue perhaps of which you boaſt, and which has not withheld you from ſuch indecent tranſports of jealouſy, as it would become a virtuous woman to ſuppreſs.'

The ſuperiority with which ſhe ſpoke, the dignity of her air and manner, ſtruck her meanſouled adverſary with ſuch awe, that ſhe continued ſilent for ſome moments, with her haggard looks fixed on her. Envy, at the view of ſo lovely a form, added new ſtrings to her rage and jealouſy. At length, ſhe poured forth a torrent of reproaches, with ſuch eagerneſs of malice, that her words were ſcarce intelligible.

'I am not uſed to ſcolding,' ſaid Miſs Courteney,

calmly, retiring towards her bed-chamber, 'and you, Mrs. Bale, ſeem to be an excellent ſcold.'

The lady, provoked at this appellation, employed the coarſeſt language imaginable to expreſs her reſentment of the injury; but Miſs Courteney took ſhelter in her bed-chamber, the door of which ſhe double-locked.

'Inſolent trollop,' ſaid Mrs. Bale, raiſing her voice that ſhe might hear her, 'call me ſcold! I ſcorn your words, you ſaucy, impudent, audacious huſſy: I never could ſcold in my life—no, you dirty puſs:—I am a woman of breeding; I am none of your beggarly quality: I had forty thouſand pounds to my portion, you proud paultry minx.—Scold! call me a ſcold—'

'Pray, Madam, compoſe yourſelf,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, 'and do me the favour to walk down into my parlour.—Here is ſome miſtake. I am pretty certain you have injured this young lady by your ſuſpicions.'

'Young lady!' interrupted Mrs. Bale, 'What makes her a lady?—A fine world it is, now-a-days, when beggars are called ladies. I would fain know what fortune ſhe has to put her upon a footing with ladies.'

'I know nothing of her fortune, Madam,' ſaid Mrs. Willis.

'Fortune! poor wretch!' ſaid Mrs. Bale: 'a few paultry hundreds.—Such ladies! Suppoſe her grandfather was an earl, has ſhe a fortune? anſwer me that.'

'I don't know, really,' replied Mrs. Willis. 'Well then,' ſaid Mrs. Bale, 'why do you give her a title ſhe has no right to? But why do I talk to you, vile wretch? you are my huſband's confident.'

This thought renewed all her rage, and ſhe loaded Mrs. Willis with ſuch ſhocking invectives, that the poor woman could not refrain from tears.

'Your huſband's father, Madam,' ſaid ſhe, 'has been a generous benefactor to me: I conſider that, and will be patient under your abuſe.'

The word *abuſe* was ſuch a charge upon this lady's want of breeding, that ſhe called Mrs. Willis a hundred ſaucy jades, for daring to ſay that ſhe was capable of abuſing any body; and having almoſt exhauſted her ſpi-

rits with the violence of her paſſions, and finding that Mrs. Willis ſat ſilent, and took no further notice of what ſhe ſaid, ſhe flounced out of the room, declaring, that her father-in-law ſhould know that ſhe acted as procureſs for his ſon, and that ſhe ſhould return to her rags and poverty again.

Mrs. Willis thought her behaviour diſpenſed with her from treating her with that reſpect, which ſhe would have otherwiſe paid to Mr. Bale's daughter-in-law, and therefore did not offer to wait on her down ſtairs, but rung the bell for ſomebody to attend her, and, locking the door after her, ſhe tapped gently at Miſs Courteney's chamber-door, telling her, that Mrs. Bale was gone.

'Who is this fury?' ſaid the young lady, as ſhe came out. 'You have been treated very ill by her, Mrs. Willis, I am ſorry for it.' 'And I am ſorry for what you have ſuffered, my dear Miſs,' replied Mrs. Willis; 'but Mr. Bale is to blame for it all. I am now ſure you are entirely innocent.'

'Innocent!' repeated Miſs Courteney, with a ſigh—'How low am I fallen, when that could ever be doubted! But Mrs. Willis, you knew, it ſeems, that Mr. Bale was married, I am ſurpriſed you never mentioned his wife to me.'

'And are you not ſurpriſed, Miſs,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, 'that Mr. Bale never mentioned her to you?'

'To be ſure that was very ſtrange,' replied Henrietta, 'what could he mean by it?'

'Ah! Miſs,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, 'a very little reflection on Mr. Bale's behaviour might have informed you that he was in love with you.'

'In love with me!' cried Henrietta, bluſhing with ſhame and reſentment.

'Yes,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, 'in love with you; if that can be called love, which ſeeks the ruin of its object. I ſaw it in his looks, his words, cautious as they were, his whole behaviour ſhewed it but too plainly.'

'And this man married too!' cried Henrietta, lifting up her eyes. 'To what have I, by one raſh ſtep, re-

duced myself! But still, Mrs. Willis, my first difficulty recurs, why did you avoid speaking of his wife to me?'

'Hear me, my dear, with patience,' interrupted Mrs. Willis, 'I shall be very free; but my plainness ought not to offend you, since it is a mark of my sincerity.' Mrs. Willis paused here a moment, and then proceeded, as will be found in the following chapter.

CHAP. XV.

In which those Circumstances are partly explained.

'YOU may remember I told you, soon after you came here, that before I went to Leghorn, I heard Mr. Bale was courting the daughter of a rich citizen; I had been returned but three or four days, when he came to me to know if I could accommodate a young lady, a ward of his father's, with lodging and board; to which I readily consented.

'It is no flattery, Miss, to tell you, that when I saw you, I was charmed with your person and behaviour: your beauty, and Mr. Bale's extreme assiduity, made it seem highly probable that he loved you. I set myself to examine his behaviour, and the observations I made on it confirmed my suspicions. I had then heard nothing of his being married, having upon my return been so taken up with my domestic affairs, that I had no leisure to make or receive visits, from which I could receive any information concerning what had happended in my absence.

'I was a little surprised to find that you had been introduced to me under a feigned name, and that you were not called Benson, but Courteney. However, I made no reflections upon that circumstance, till, about two days afterwards, I accidentally heard that Mr. Bale had been married two months; then it was, that in my astonishment at his so cautiously avoiding any mention of his wife, I was led to reflect upon what you yourself had informed me of your situation, your flight from your friends; Mr. Bale's apparent tenderness for you awakened suspicions, I own disadvantageous to you.

'I waited impatiently for the hour of Mr. Bale's visiting you, and the moment I saw him wished him joy

on his marriage, expreſſing my ſurpriſe that I ſhould not have heard of that event from himſelf. He coloured, and ſeemed in great confuſion; and, after a little pauſe, Have you ſaid any thing of it to Miſs Courteney? ſaid he.

'I replied that I had heard the news but an hour before, and had not ſeen you ſince.

'You will oblige me, ſaid he, if you will not mention it to her—I ſtared—My wife, continued he, is the moſt unreaſonable woman in the world; ſhe has taken it into her head to be horribly jealous of me, though we have been married ſo ſhort a time—It was a match (and he ſighed) of my father's making—but I aſſure you I am very unhappy.

'I am ſorry for it, Sir, interrupted I, but what reaſons have you for concealing from Miſs Courteney that you are married?

'It is a ſad thing, Mrs. Willis, ſaid he, when a man is not maſter in his own family. I hope that is not your caſe, Sir, anſwered I. Indeed but it is, he replied. Miſs Courteney, you know, is agreeable. Oh! very agreeable, ſaid I. My wife is of ſuch an unaccountable humour, reſumed he, that I durſt not offer Miſs Courteney, though my father is her guardian, an aſylum in my houſe, till her relations were reconciled to her, leſt I ſhould be teazed with jealouſy and ſuſpicions.

'I am perſuaded, Sir, ſaid I, that Miſs Courteney has too much good ſenſe to take it amiſs that you did not invite her to your houſe as things were circumſtanced. She has more reaſon to be diſpleaſed at your concealing your marriage from her, which every body knows, and which ſhe would ſoon know if ſhe lived leſs retired.

'Let me intreat you, Mrs. Willis, ſaid he, not to mention it to Miſs Courteney. I would not upon any account that ſhe ſhould know I am married, yet could not offer her an apartment in my houſe.

'Indeed, Sir, ſaid I, ſmiling, you make this matter of more conſequence than you need to do; Miſs Courteney will not conſider it as any ſlight to her.

'She muſt either think herſelf ſlighted (reſumed he, with quickneſs) by my not inviting her, or ſhe will divine the reaſon, which would be worſe; for in that caſe, her delicacy is ſo extreme, that ſhe would never allow me to ſee her.

'Ah, thought I, is it ſo! He perceived he had almoſt betrayed himſelf; and changed the diſcourſe, aſking me many queſtions about my huſband, whoſe diligence and fidelity he highly extolled, dropping hints of deſigns in his favour; and indeed it is in his power to be of great ſervice to him.

'But I had no ſatisfaction,' purſued Mrs. Willis, 'in what he ſaid; for, to my apprehenſion, it appeared as if he ſought to bribe me into a concurrence with his deſigns, whatever they were. Therefore I ſat ſilent, and I believe diſcovered by my looks, that I did not like his proceedings; for he roſe up, and, with an air of ſome reſentment, ſaid,

'That his father would be in town in a few days, and would then diſpoſe of you properly; and that in the mean time he muſt inſiſt upon my being ſilent with regard to his marriage, ſince it would throw him into great confuſion if you knew it; and added, that he thought he might reaſonably expect this inſtance of my complaiſance.

'I told him that I was very glad to hear his father would be in town ſo ſoon, and would take the young lady under his own care: that ſince he deſired it, I would not be the firſt to acquaint you with his marriage; I owned his reaſons appeared to me very whimſical: but that it was not my buſineſs to be impertinently curious; and that I ſhould concern myſelf no farther about it.

'He ſeemed pleaſed with this indifference, and went up ſtairs to ſee you. I had already taken my reſolution, my dear Miſs Courteney, which was to write to his father, and acquaint him with the whole tranſaction. I was willing to leave the young gentleman in a falſe ſecurity, that he might not ſuſpect my deſign, and take meaſures to render it uſeleſs; and not being ſure how

far even you might be trufted, for my fufpicions of you, though weakened, were not yet removed, I thought it beft to fay nothing that could alarm you, till I had received the old gentleman's advice how to act; but my meafures were broke by Mr. Bale's refolving to take you from my houfe.

'He came into the parlour to me to-day, before you faw him, and told me, that he had directions from his father to fend you into the country, becaufe he did not expect to return for fome time yet, and he did not approve of your refiding in London till he came.

'You may eafily imagine, Mifs, that I was not fatisfied with the caufe he affigned for this fudden refolution. I was now alarmed for you; and judged it neceffary to acquaint you immediately with Mr. Bale's being married, that you might not fall ignorantly into his fnares. I began with afking you queftions, to which the opennefs and fimplicity of your anfwers convinced me that you were impofed upon greatly by Mr. Bale. I was going to explain myfelf clearly, when Mrs. Bale's arrival interrupted me. You know with what earneftnefs I intreated you not to leave my houfe; I was apprehenfive that he was come to hurry you away, and I trembled for the danger to which you were expofed.

'When I left you, I met Mrs. Bale upon the ftairs; and, not knowing her, I afked, who it was fhe defired to fee? The young woman that lodges with you, faid fhe, in a tone of voice that furprifed me. I told her, I would go and acquaint you that there was a lady wanted to fpeak to you: but fhe rufhed by me, faying, there is no need of that ceremony, I fhall introduce myfelf.

'Her behaviour recalling to my mind what Mr. Bale had faid of his wife's jealoufy, I fufpected this was the lady; and, to be affured, I enquired of a fervant, who attended her, who fhe was. The moment I knew it was really her, I flew up ftairs, being full of concern for you; for I faw a ftorm in her countenance, and dreaded the confequence.—The poor young man is indeed plagued with a jealous wife; and in that particular he told the

truth. But, my dear Miſs, I ſee plainly that the myſtery he has made of his connections with you has rouzed her ſuſpicions.'

'It is all an incomprehenſible myſtery to me,' ſaid Henrietta, ſighing: 'Mr. Bale has certainly deceived me, for what purpoſes I know not; but I know that I will never ſee him again, but in the preſence of his father, to have this dark affair cleared up.

'But, my dear Mrs. Willis, how ſhall I expreſs what my heart feels for you, who have ſhewn ſo tender a regard for my honour and quiet—How miſerable might I have been, had you been leſs good.—I am ſure I may rely upon your prudence—Adviſe me then what to do: you know my ſtory; you ſee my preſent ſituation.—I have no friend, no protector.'

'My dear Miſs,' interrupted Mrs. Willis, 'there is but one thing for you to do, and that is, to return to your aunt.'

'How can I appear before her?' ſaid Henrietta, 'after having ſo greatly diſobliged her by my flight; a flight which has had ſuch diſgraceful conſequences. Beſides, do not the ſame motives that obliged me to leave her, ſtill ſubſiſt? and are they not equally ſtrong againſt my returning?'

'I would not pain you, my dear Miſs,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, 'with the recollection of a paſt error, were it not to make it uſeful to you in your preſent circumſtances.—Warned as you were of your aunt's deſigns, it was impoſſible to carry them into execution without your concurrence: your flight therefore was not neceſſary, and, if not neceſſary, ſurely it was highly imprudent; and, in my opinion, can only be repaired by a voluntary return.—Need I tell a young lady of your delicacy, that imputations, however unjuſt, ſully, if they do not ſtain a character. Do you think this woman's frantic jealouſy will be ſilent? how can you otherwiſe prove the falſhood of her aſſertions, than by returning to your aunt, and making yourſelf accountable to her for all your actions? Nothing can be more unfortunate for youth and beauty, than to be left to its own guidance

and discretion. The world seldom attributes too much prudence to youth: however regular our conduct may be in that gay time of life, it is supposed to be owing to the care and attention of our parents or relations, rather than to our own circumspection. Can a young woman, who voluntarily sets herself free from that restraint, hope to escape unfavourable censures, when those who owe it to chance only that they are not subjected to any control, suffer perhaps in the opinion of the world, because they are possessed of a liberty which they may make an improper use of?

'You see, my dear, to what inconveniencies you have been exposed: these are the necessary consequences of your unprotected state; there is no doubt but you would repel every attempt to the prejudice of your honour: but does not modesty, if not virtue, suffer by such attempts? and can you acquit yourself of imprudence, when you reflect that you have thrown yourself into a situation which renders you liable to them?'

'It was indeed,' said Henrietta, who, by her blushes and confusion, acknowledged the strength of her reasons, 'imprudence to throw myself into this situation, but it would be guilt to continue in it. Oh! that I had had such a friend as you to advise with at Windsor, I should never have taken a step, which I blush to think of now. I will return to my aunt, Mrs. Willis, I will throw myself upon her mercy; and if I must be made a sacrifice of——'

'Indeed, my dear, interrupted Mrs. Willis, 'these fears are groundless: you cannot possibly be married against your consent; and you have it always in your power to refuse. As for the convent, you cannot be cheated into it, that is certain, since you know she had such a design, and may guard against it.'

'But suppose, said Miss Courteney, that she should not receive me again; Mr. Bale found her inexorable.'

'Ah! my dear,' replied Mrs. Willis, shaking her head, 'Mr. Bale was not a fit person to be trusted with such a negociation: but, however that may be, I am sure, when your aunt knows in what manner he has

acted, and the reasons you have to distrust him, she will think it necessary to take you out of his hands. Your return to her will remove her suspicions against you, and convince her that it was from a sudden impulse of fear only, that you left her; and that you had no desire of disposing of yourself contrary to her inclinations.'

'But I have one favour to beg of you, said Miss Courteney, and that is, that you will go along with me to my aunt; resentment may shut her ears to all that I can say to her, but I think she cannot resist your pleas, urged with that good sense you possess in so high a degree.'

'Doubt not, my dear, said Mrs. Willis, but I am ready to do you any service in my power.'

'What hinders us then from going directly?' cried Henrietta, eagerly; 'we can get a post-chaise, and—'

'The day is too far advanced, replied Mrs. Willis, we will, if you please, set out early to-morrow morning. I will take care to have a post-chaise in readiness; in the mean time you may depend upon being secure from any disagreeable visits here, neither Mr. Bale nor his fury of a wife shall see you, unless you desire they should.'

'Notwithstanding the treatment she gave me, said Miss Courteney, I would rather see her than him; but you may well imagine, Mrs. Willis, that I do not wish to see either of them.'

'Make yourself easy, my dear, said Mrs. Willis, you shall meet with no insult of any kind in my house.'

Henrietta embraced her with tears of gratitude, which the good woman returned with a parental tenderness, and then left her to give the necessary directions for their little journey the next day.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

HENRIETTA.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

In which our Heroine meets with a new Disappointment, and some farther Instances of Miss Woodby's Friendship.

HENRIETTA, being now left to her own reflections, beheld her late conduct in a light in which it had never appeared to her before; the sense of blame so justly incurred, filled her with remorse and shame. Hitherto she had industriously aggravated the cause of her fears, that she might not stand self condemned; which to an ingenuous mind is of all others the greatest evil: but Mrs. Willis had stated her case too justly.

What force could give her unwilling hand to the old baronet? How could she be cheated into a convent, when she was forewarned of the design? From her obstinate opposition to her aunt's will, nothing worse could have happened than the loss of her favour and protection, which by her flight she had anticipated. She now wondered at the unreasonableness of her fears, and looked back with the deepest regret upon the errors they had occasioned.

These melancholy thoughts, and her anxiety about the reception her aunt would give her, kept her waking almost the whole night. As soon as it was light, she rose, and dressed herself, impatient to be gone; Mrs. Willis at her summons made haste to join her, and, when they had breakfasted, set out immediately upon their journey; Henrietta full of perturbation and inquietude, Mrs. Willis with that serenity which attends the consciousness of doing what is right.

The young lady, as she drew nearer her aunt's dwelling, found her emotions increase; one while her imagi-

nation represented lady Meadows as kind and indulgent, ready to forgive her error, and to restore her to her affection; and, immediately after, she would tremble with the apprehension of her severe reproaches.

Mrs. Willis perceived her uneasiness, and used her utmost endeavours to compose her: but when the chaise stopped at the door, she was near falling into a fainting fit; and her friend was obliged to ask if lady Meadows was at home, for Henrietta was not able to speak.

The servant-maid, who opened the door, having got a glympse of the young lady as she sat in the chaise, eagerly flew to the side of it—'O my dear Miss?' said she, in a transport of joy, 'is it you?'

'How do you do, Jenny?' said Miss Courteney; and trembling, added, 'is my aunt at home?'

'My lady,' said the girl, 'set out two days ago for her seat in Devonshire. Oh! Miss, here has been sad doings, poor Mrs. White is turned away; there came an ugly mischief-making lady from London, and told my lady a heap of stories about you, and so Mrs. White was turned away: but won't you please to alight, Miss?'

Henrietta looked at Mrs. Willis, for she knew not herself what to resolve on, the news she had heard having thrown her into the utmost perplexity.—'I wish we could see Mrs. White,' said Mrs. Willis to her in a whisper.

Miss Courteney immediately enquired of the maid, how long Mrs. White had left her aunt, and where she was to be found? The girl told her she had been gone above a week, and that she believed she was at her sister's in Windsor. Henrietta had often heard her mention her sister, who was married to a tradesman in Windsor; and, after she had taken leave of the poor affectionate girl, who wept to see her depart again, she gave the post-boy directions where to drive.

Mrs. White, when the chaise stopped at the door, heard from a little parlour where she was sitting, the voice of Miss Couretency enquiring for her, and flew with trembling eagerness to meet her.

'Oh! Miss,' said she, taking her hand, and leading

her into the room; 'I am rejoiced to see you: where have you been all this time.—What an unfortunate creature was I to be the means of your taking such a rash resolution—Oh? that I had kept what I knew to myself.—But surely, it was very unkind in you not to acquaint me with your design, not to ask my advice. I might have prevented all this trouble; but thank Heaven you are safe and well—well I see you are.'

Henrietta then interrupting the good woman, who, between chiding and fondness, had taken no notice of Mrs. Willis: 'That I am safe, said she, I am obliged to this gentlewoman; for some strange treachery was preparing for me, I believe, but her care has prevented it.'

'Treachery!' interrupted Mrs. White—'Aye, you have met with enough of that, I suppose: there was your new-found friend and acquaintance, Miss —— I forget her name, whom you told all your secrets to; you made no scruple to trust her, Miss, though you was so reserved to me; she was the occasion of my losing my place. Ah! Miss, but I will not upbraid you; I see you are concerned: God forbid I should add to your uneasiness; I have suffered greatly upon your account. It was very unkind in you to put it in the power of a stranger to do me so much mischief: surely I did not deserve such a return from you. But God knows my heart, I would not upbraid you for the world; no, I scorn it; but I have been the greatest sufferer, I am sure, and yet I meant well.'

'Was not the lady's name Woodby?' interrupted Henrietta, impatient to hear the particulars of this new act of treachery and baseness.

'Aye, Woodby,' replied Mrs. White, 'a disagreeable creature as ever my eyes beheld. I shall never forget how she sidled into my lady's dressing room, and, half out of breath, told her, she had taken the liberty to wait on her to bring her some news of her niece. I could not hear distinctly all she said, for my lady ordered me to withdraw; but I put my ear to the key-hole, as I

had done once before for your ſervice, Miſs, which I have reaſon to repent, Heaven knows—but what is paſt cannot be helped—it is not my way to *rip* up things that are paſt.

'Well,' ſaid Henrietta, 'but what did you hear?'

'Nay, for that matter,' reſumed Mrs. White, 'I may draw myſelf into another *premune* perhaps: after what I have ſuffered I ought to be cautious; but I love you, Miſs, and muſt tell you every thing, whatever it coſt me, and that you have experienced already. Well, ſhe made up a horrible ſtory, that you had gone away ſuddenly from lodgings where ſhe viſited you, and notwithſtanding the friendſhip there was between you, and a great clutter ſhe made with that word, you went away without giving her any notice of your intention; and this ſhe ſaid had a ſtrange appearance.'

Miſs Courteney lifted up her eyes here, in aſtoniſhment at what ſhe heard.

'As for me,' continued Mrs. White, 'ſhe did my buſineſs in an inſtant; for as ſoon as ſhe was gone, my lady ſent for me, and, in a violent rage, told me I ſhould not ſtay another night in her houſe. She was informed, ſhe ſaid, that I had been the cauſe of your running away, by filling your head with notions of her deſigning to confine you in a convent. She would hear nothing that I could ſay in my own defence; and diſmiſſed me that very evening.'

'I am exceſſively ſorry,' ſaid Henrietta, 'that you ſhould ſuffer ſo much on my account—It was indeed very imprudent in me to be ſo communicative to Miſs Woodby, but I could not imagine ſhe was capable of ſo much treachery.

'But how have you been able to conceal yourſelf ſo well, Miſs, from the enquiries of all your friends?' ſaid Mrs. White. 'Mr. Bale, it ſeems, your guardian's ſon, knew not where to find you.'

'Did Mr. Bale ſay he knew not where I was?' cried Miſs Courteney, in aſtoniſhment.

'He told Mr. Danvers ſo,' replied Mrs. White, 'who

went ſeveral times by my lady's orders to enquire for you.'

'Was there ever ſuch complicated treachery!' ſaid Henrietta, looking at Mrs. Willis, with tears in her eyes. 'Well, my dear,' ſaid the good woman, 'there is at leaſt this advantage in misfortunes, that they bring us at laſt to wiſdom. You will for the future be more cautious how you engage in ſuch perilous enterprizes.'

'Ay, Miſs,' ſaid Mrs. White, 'and how you truſt falſe friends to the prejudice of your true ones.—You ſee what it has coſt me—but no more of that—I can forget and forgive.'

'Well, and what is now to be done?' ſaid Miſs Courteney, folding her hands with a melancholy air.

'It is eaſy to anſwer that queſtion,' ſaid Mrs. Willis; 'you muſt write to your aunt, my dear, and give her an account of all that has happened to you. There is certainly ſomething to condemn in what you have done; but in what you have ſuffered, there is much to be pitied. I am perſuaded her tenderneſs will ſilence her reſentment. I hoped to have left you with your aunt, Miſs,' continued Mrs. Willis; 'but ſince that cannot be, you will return with me, I ſuppoſe.'

'To be ſure I will,' ſaid Miſs Courteney, 'with whom in my preſent ſituation can I be ſo happy as with you?'

Mrs. White deſired ſhe might be permitted to come and ſee her, to which Henrietta readily conſented; promiſing, if ſhe was reconciled to her aunt, to uſe her utmoſt endeavours to reinſtate her in her place.

CHAP. II.

Which throws new Lights upon Mr. Bale's Behaviour, and contains a very improving Converſation,

THE two ladies being again ſeated in their poſt-chaiſe, Mrs. Willis kindly applied herſelf to comfort her fair companion, whoſe affecting ſilence, ſhewed a deeper ſenſe of her new diſappointment than any words could expreſs. However, Miſs Courteney felt in reality

fewer perturbations and leſs anxiety in her return, than when ſhe began her journey. So true it is, that when we hope little, we fear little likewiſe.

She now looked upon her aunt's affection as irrecoverable; Miſs Woodby's vile inſinuations had ſtrengthened her ſuſpicions: Mr. Bale, when he found himſelf detected, would doubtleſs account for his behaviour in a manner unfavourable to her; her unhappy flight had given ſuch a colour to her ſucceeding actions, as rendered any juſtification of herſelf hopeleſs; and the inſidious chaplain might now with eaſe confirm thoſe prejudices he had raiſed.

In this manner ſhe reaſoned herſelf into a belief that her misfortune was irremediable: deſpair, as an ingenious writer obſerves, being that eaſe to the mind which mortification is to the fleſh, Henrietta found ſome relief in being freed from that viciſſitude of hopes and fears which had ſo long held her mind in the moſt racking ſuſpence; and, with a kind of gloomy ſatisfaction, reſigned herſelf to all the bitterneſs of her fate.

Mrs. Willis, who knew not the peculiarities of lady Meadows's temper, or if ſhe had, would not perhaps have conſidered, that obſtinate people are ever moſt obſtinate in error, thought all things might be ſet right again, by Miſs Courtney's giving a candid narrative of what had happened to her ſince her leaving her; ſhe therefore preſſed the young lady to delay writing to her aunt no longer than the next day.

'There are ſome caſes,' ſaid Mrs. Willis to her, when ſhe ſaw her ſitting down to write, in which ſimplicity is the greateſt refinement of art; yours is one of them: be as ſimple and ingenuous as you can in the account you give your aunt, and let the facts ſpeak for themſelves.'

Henrietta followed her advice, and related every part of her conduct ſince ſhe had left her, and the treachery and deceit that had been uſed towards her, with the utmoſt plainneſs and ſincerity, and ſaw that ſhe had made her letter more affecting by its ſimplicity, than ſhe could have done by the niceſt touches of art. Mrs. Willis

read it, and approved of it; and it was immediately dispatched to the post.

Scarce was this little affair over, when Mr. Bale sent in his name.

'I like this piece of ceremony,' said Mrs. Willis; 'it looks as if the man was ashamed of what he has done: do you chuse to see him, Miss?'

'Oh! no,' replied Henrietta; 'it would be strange indeed, if I was willing to see a man whom you suspect of having such shocking designs, and who I am sure has not acted honestly.'

'Well then,' said Mrs. Willis, 'I will go down to him, and hear what he has to say.'

She returned again in less than an hour, smiling. 'This young man,' said she, 'does not want sense: what would you say, Miss, if I was to tell you that he has persuaded me he has acted very right, and with the best intentions in the world.'

'I should say that I am less unhappy than I thought I was,' replied Miss Courteney; 'for surely it is a great misfortune to meet with persons who abuse our confidence and the good opinion we have of them.'

'That misfortune,' said Mrs. Willis, 'will in time become so common, that you will feel it less sensibly than you do now. The only way to avoid being deceived, is to be always upon your guard against deceit.'

'That is to say, I must be always suspicious,' said Henrietta; 'that may be a very prudent maxim, but my heart disavows it.'

'Alas! my dear,' replied Mrs. Willis, 'we all enter upon the world with high notions of disinterestedness, friendship, sincerity, and candor: but experience shows us, that these qualities exist not, or among so very few, that it does not fall to the lot of one mortal in a thousand to meet with them in those we contract friendships with. The frequent disappointments we suffer in the search of them, make suspicion grow into a habit of thinking, which if it lessens our enjoyments lessens our inconveniencies likewise.'

'Then I,' said Miss Courteney, 'shall be always exposed to inconveniencies; for I am sure I can never bring myself to suspect persons who appear deserving of my good opinion: and indeed I think it is more honourable to be often deceived, than to be always doubting.'

'But it is not so safe,' replied Mrs. Willis, smiling: 'however, my dear, in unexperienced youth, like yours, this way of thinking is meritorious; the faults of the world can only be learned by a long acquaintance with it, and by suffering from that acquaintance. Those who derive this kind of knowledge from the heart rather than the head, are indeed safe themselves, but dangerous to all others.

'But I will keep you no longer in suspense, with regard to Mr. Bale. He has glossed over his behaviour so as to make me appear satisfied with it, which indeed it is necessary I should; if I would not wish to make an enemy of him; and a very powerful one he might be to my husband.

'He asked for you as soon as he saw me, and did not seem surprised at the very slight excuse I made for your not seeing him. He expressed great concern for the treatment you had received from his wife; for in her frantic rage it seems she told him all that had passed between you.'

'You find,' said he, 'I did not exaggerate my wife's failing.'

'It is a great misfortune,' replied I; 'but, Sir, I think if you had not made a secret of your connections with Miss Courteney, Mrs. Bale's jealousy would not have had so plausible an excuse, nor would the young lady have had any reason to complain of you.'

'I should have found it absolutely impossible,' said he, 'to have concerned myself in Miss Courteney's affairs, or been of the least use to her, had my wife known any thing of the matter; the very sight of Miss Courteney would have roused her suspicions, and have put it out of my power to act either as a friend or guardian by her;

and, in her unhappy ſituation, ſhe had great need of my care and attention.'

'However, Sir,' replied I, 'it was certainly ill judged to conceal from Miſs Courteney, that you was married: what muſt ſhe think of ſuch a ſtrange conduct?'

'Why, Mrs. Willis,' reſumed he, 'I have already told you, that I could not own my marriage to Miſs Courteney, without letting her into my reaſons for not being able to offer her an aſylum in my houſe, during her aunt's diſpleaſure, an offer ſhe had great reaſon to expect. I was unwilling to expoſe my wife's foible, and to raiſe ſcruples in the young lady's mind, which might prevent her from receiving thoſe little ſervices from me which ſhe had ſo much need of: I hope you will repreſent all this to her, and let her know how greatly I am afflicted at what ſhe has ſuffered.'

'To be ſure I will, replied I; but Miſs Courteney tells me you have received letters from Mr. Bale, in which he acquaints you that there are ſome foreign merchants coming to reſide in my houſe, and that ſhe was to be removed for that reaſon. I ſurpriſed her greatly, by ſaying I had heard nothing of it; and indeed I am a good deal ſurpriſed myſelf at it.'

'Why, to be plain with you, Mrs. Willis,' ſaid the young gentleman, 'this was only an invention."

'Indeed!' ſaid I, looking very grave: 'to be ſure you had ſome very good reaſon for it.'

'Doubtleſs I had,' purſued he, 'and you yourſelf ſhall be judge of my reaſon.—This is a bad world, Mrs. Willis, a very bad world; nothing but ſtratagems and deſigns, fraud and cunning. Our ſex, Mrs. Willis, is in a ſtate of war with yours, our arms are ſighs and vows, and flattery and proteſtation, and (as in all other warfares) we fight to deſtroy.'

'Bleſs us,' interrupted Henrietta, half ſmiling, 'what could this fine preface lead to?'

'I proteſt,' reſumed Mrs. Willis, laughing, 'it was with the utmoſt difficulty I compoſed my countenance to a look of grave attention; while he uttered all this

with a ſolemn accent, and an air of infinite importance.'

'Truly Sir, replied I, for ſo young a gentleman you think very gravely of theſe matters: it is highly commendable in one of your years.'

'Heaven forbid, Mrs. Willis,' ſaid he, 'that all men ſhould be libertines; but in ſhort it was to preſerve Miſs Courteney from falling into the ſnares of one, that I formed an excuſe for ſending her into the country.'

'Vile diſſembler!' exclaimed Miſs Courteney again, glowing with indignation; 'preſerve me from falling into the ſnares of a libertine! I hope my own diſcretion, without any aid from him, was ſufficient to guard me againſt any ſnares that a libertine could lay for me.'

'I hope ſo too,' ſaid Mrs. Willis.

Henrietta bluſhed a little at this expreſſion, which ſeemed, ſhe thought, to imply a doubt, but would not interrupt Mrs. Willis again.

'I told you that this gentleman was very artful,' continued the good woman, 'as you will be convinced by the ſtory he told.'

'You muſt know,' ſaid he to me, looking extremely wiſe, and lowering his voice, 'that when I waited upon Miſs Courteney at the lodgings ſhe had taken after ſhe left her aunt, I obſerved a fine gay young man there, who followed me when I went out, and looked at me in a manner that ſhewed great curioſity and attention. It came into my head that this might be the ſpark of whom Miſs Courteney's aunt was apprehenſive: I diſcovered that he lodged in the houſe with the young lady; and this circumſtance I liked by no means. I reſolved to remove her immediately, and place her with you: ſhe ſo readily conſented to my propoſal, that I doubted whether I had not been extremely miſtaken in my conjectures concerning this young gentleman; but a day or two after ſhe was ſettled with you, my ſpark came to enquire for her at my houſe: now it was plain that Miſs Courteney held ſome correſpondence with him, otherwiſe he could not have known where to come after her.

'I happened not to be at home, and the ſervants told

him, that no ſuch perſon was there. He came ſeveral times, and was always anſwered in the ſame manner. His enquiries at length reached the ears of my wife; ſhe deſired he might be ſhewn up to her apartment when he came next; and it was from him that ſhe learned Miſs Courteney was under my care.

'To one of her temper it was enough to know that I had the management of a lady's affairs, to make her ſuſpect that I had a more than ordinary intereſt in the lady herſelf. But ſhe concealed her thoughts from me: and I, who was wholly ignorant that this gentleman had ſeen my wife, was only concerned at the connection there ſeemed to be between Miſs Courteney and him; and therefore fixed upon that ſtratagem, to remove her out of his reach, without giving her any ſuſpicions of the cauſe.

'I have ſince enquired about the gentleman; and I hear that he is a man of quality, and that he is ſhortly to be married to a great fortune. Judge now whether his deſigns on Miſs Courteney could be honourable; and whether I had not reaſon to act as I did with regard to ſending her away?

'And now, my dear,' added Mrs. Willis, ſmiling, 'did you ever hear a more plauſible tale?'

'I have ſomewhere read it obſerved,' replied Henrietta, 'that we are better deceived by having ſome truth told us than none. Mr. Bale has put this maxim in practice; his tale is plauſible, becauſe part of it is true: but his inferences are all falſe; and their cauſe lies too deep for me to diſcover it.'

She then related ſuccinctly all that had paſſed in the houſe of Mrs. Eccles, and that ſhe had earneſtly intreated Mr. Bale to diſpoſe of her elſewhere, being reſolved, after the affront that had been offered to her, to remain there no longer. She added, that the young lord having hinted his ſuſpicions that Mr. Bale was her lover, ſhe thought herſelf obliged to tell him his name, and explain the nature of his connections with her, that ſhe might not, by going away with a perſon unknown, leave room for calumny to ſlander her.

Mrs. Willis was charmed with this candid account of her conduct, which overthrew all Mr. Bale's insinuations. She embraced her with great tenderneſs. 'All will ſoon be ſet right, ſaid ſhe, your aunt will receive you with redoubled affection.' Miſs Courteney ſighed; but having already taken her reſolution, ſhe was prepared for whatever events might happen.

CHAP. III.

Which we are afraid will give ſome of our Readers a mean Opinion of our Heroine's Underſtanding.

TWO days afterwards a letter was brought by the poſt for Miſs Courteney; the direction was in her aunt's hand: ſhe opened it with trepidation, and found it as follows:

'HENRIETTA,

'For niece I cannot, after what has happened, call you—If you had not, by the higheſt imprudence that any young woman could be guilty of, given too much colour for the ſhocking cenſures that are caſt on you, I might perhaps have been deceived by your plauſible account of things. I am ſorry to find you have acquired ſo much art, it is but too ſure a proof that you are leſs innocent; yet it would be eaſy for me to take to pieces every part of your defence, and ſhew you the abſurdity of it: but this is needleſs; for, whether you are innocent or guilty, you have greatly wounded your reputation, and I can no longer with honour conſider you or treat you as my niece.

'There is but one way left by which you can retrieve your fame and my affection; motives which ought to have ſome weight with you, but infinitely leſs than the deſire of ſecuring your ſalvation.

'I hoped and believed your converſion was near completed, and doubtleſs it would have been, had not your paſſions intervened.

'If you will retire to a convent, and put yourſelf into a way of being inſtructed in the true religion, I will pay your penſion largely; and the day that ſees you reunited to the faith, ſhall ſee you reſtored to my fondeſt affection, and made ſole heireſs to my whole eſtate. Conſider well before you determine; and know, that upon any other terms than theſe, you muſt not hope for farther notice from me.

'F. MEADOWS.'

Although ſeveral parts of this letter were extremely ſhocking, both to the delicacy and pride of Henrietta, yet

the shining bribe that was offered her to procure her apostasy, made a large compensation. She had now an opportunity given her of making a worthy sacrifice to the religion she believed and professed; a circumstance that exalted her in her own opinion: for her self-love had been deeply wounded by the humiliations she had undergone; and as great delicacy always suffers most, so it enjoys most from its own reflection.

She was not free from a little enthusiasm that told her it was glorious to suffer in the cause of religion, nor so disinterested as not to feel great pleasure in the thought of being able to free her moral character from injurious suspicions, by so firm an attachment to her religious principles.

Her impatience to answer her aunt's letter, would not allow her time to communicate to Mrs. Willis the contents of it: but as soon as she had done writing, she sent for the good woman, and put lady Meadows's letter into her hands, with such an air of conscious satisfaction, as persuaded her the so much desired reconciliation was effected; but when, upon reading the letter, she found her mistake, she threw it down, and, in a melancholy accent, and a look that expressed the most anxious curiosity, asked her how she had resolved?

'Read this,' said Henrietta, giving her the letter she had written; 'I am sure you will not disapprove of what I have done.' Mrs. Willis read it eagerly, and found it as follows:

'MADAM,

'It is a great grief to me to find that your affection is irrecoverable, for at the price you have set upon it, I must ever deem it so. If my defence seems absurd, Madam, it is because truth is too weak to combat prejudice: I leave it to time and my future conduct to clear my innocence, and am resolved never to give a confirmation to those aspersions which are cast on my character, by sacrificing my religion to my interest.

'That poverty which happily is become my choice, will be my best vindication; and if it affords me no other blessing but that of a good conscience, it will bestow on me the highest that is attainable in this life, and which will enable me to bear

chearfully all the misfortunes that may befal me; among which I ſhall always look upon the loſs of your eſteem as the greateſt. I am, Madam, with all due gratitude and reſpect, your obliged and very humble ſervant,

'HENRIETTA COURTENEY.'

'I muſt approve, nay admire your reſolution, Miſs,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, returning the letter; 'and if you perſiſt in it, you will appear to me a wonder.'

'Do you doubt my perſiſting in it?' replied Henrietta.

'When I conſider,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, 'your birth, your youth, your beauty, and the expectations you have been encouraged to entertain, I know it muſt coſt you a great deal to throw away the advantages that are offered you, and which poſſibly you might ſecure by temporiſing at leaſt.'

'Diſſimulation,' interrupted Henrietta, 'on any occaſion, is mean and ſcandalous; but in matters of religion it is ſurely a heinous crime; and I hope I am far enough from committing it; but I own I have many motives to ſtimulate my reſolution.

'My own imprudence, and the treachery of others, have given a wound to my reputation, which a voluntary poverty can only repair. In this licentious age, ſhe, who with youth and even the ſlighteſt advantages of perſon, dares to be poor, deſerves ſurely to be thought virtuous; and I ſhall ever acknowledge the bounty of Providence, that, amidſt the unjuſt cenſures which have been caſt on me, has made an humble lot my choice.'

'I am ſatisfied,' interrupted Mrs. Willis: 'reaſon, I ſee, has a greater ſhare in your ſo lately formed reſolution, than the zeal of enthuſiaſm, or the ſuggeſtions of vanity; and you may believe me a true friend to your fame, when I heartily congratulate you on your preſent ſituation. And now, my dear Miſs, ſuffer me to aſſure you of my tendereſt friendſhip; a friendſhip which cannot be contented with bare profeſſions, and inſiſts upon your putting it to ſome trial.

'Tell me how I can ſerve you? O! that you would honour me ſo far as to let this houſe be your aſylum till

fortune does juſtice to your merit. Condeſcend to live with me, my dear Miſs, and ſhare my little income.'

'You are very kind, dear Mrs. Willis,' replied Henrietta; 'but my circumſtances will not permit me to continue your boarder, and no diſtreſs ſhall oblige me to be burthenſome to a friend. I have already reſolved how to diſpoſe of myſelf, and, in the ſcheme I have formed, I ſhall need your aſſiſtance.'

'Tell me my dear,' cried Mrs. Willis, eagerly, 'how I can be of any uſe to you!'

'You muſt,' replied Henrietta, bluſhing a little: 'you muſt get me a ſervice, my dear Mrs. Willis.'

'A ſervice!' exclaimed the good woman.

'I am very well qualified,' reſumed Henrietta, recovering from her firſt confuſion, and ſmiling, 'to wait upon a woman of faſhion: for my mother gave me a uſeful as well as genteel education; and this ſtation will be at once private enough to ſecure me from diſagreeable accidents, and publick enough to make my conduct acquit or condemn me.

'I will not,' added ſhe, obſerving Mrs. Willis continued ſilent, 'offer myſelf to any place by my own name; that would look like an inſult upon my great relations, and be perhaps an obſtruction to my ſucceſs. It is ſufficient for me, that whenever I am diſcovered, it may be in circumſtances at which they, not I, need be aſhamed.'

'When I firſt heard you mention this ſcheme,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, 'I thought I could never be brought to approve it; but a little reflection has convinced me that it may have good conſequences.' You cannot be long concealed; that graceful form will ſoon draw notice upon you. Whenever you are known to be in a ſtation ſo unworthy your birth and merit, the pride of your relations will be rouzed. How glorious then will this humiliation be for you! Methinks I ſee their confuſion for their neglect of you, and their eagerneſs to repair it, by reſtoring you to the rank you was born in—Oh! my dear, you will certainly be happy yet, I am ſure you will.'

Henrietta ſmiled a little at the good woman's ſanguine expectations; but in reality, the ſame thoughts had made a great impreſſion upon her, and contributed, more than ſhe imagined, to allay the uneaſineſs ſhe felt at being reduced to take ſuch a ſtep. By degrees ſhe formed in her own mind ſo romantic a ſcene, that ſhe grew impatient to enter upon it, and again intreated the aſſiſtance of Mrs. Willis.

The good woman telling her that a couſin of her huſband's was a mantua-maker, and in great vogue at the court end of the town, it was agreed that ſhe ſhould go to her, and engage her good offices towards recommending the young lady to a place; it being very likely that among her cuſtomers, who were moſtly women of quality, ſhe might hear of one that would ſuit her.

CHAP. IV.

Which contains trifling Matters.

MRS. Willis ſucceeded beyond her hopes; the mantua-maker had been deſired by a lady ſhe worked for, to look out for a genteel young perſon to ſerve her in the quality of her woman; and promiſed her couſin, that ſhe would mention her friend to the lady the next day, being to wait on her with ſome cloaths that were to be tried on. She added, that the lady was a citizen, but had an immenſe fortune, and that her place was certainly a very good one.

Henrietta ſeemed very well pleaſed with her landlady's ſucceſs, though ſhe was not free from ſome uneaſy perturbations at the thoughts of the condition ſhe was ſo ſoon to enter upon.

Mrs. Meaſure did not fail to viſit her couſin the next day. 'Well, ſaid ſhe, I have done the young gentlewoman's buſineſs: ſhe has nothing to do but to wait upon Miſs Cordwain; and, if ſhe likes her figure, ſhe will hire her directly.'

'Why, pray,' replied Mrs. Willis, 'what kind of figure will beſt pleaſe this lady?'

'Oh!' cried Mrs. Meaſure, 'Miſs Cordwain's woman muſt be very genteel, and look like a gentlewoman; the richer ſhe is dreſſed too, when ſhe goes to wait on

her, the better. Every thing about Miſs Cordwain muſt be magnificent. Well,' purſued ſhe, laughing, and taking a pinch of ſnuff, which produced ſeveral little pauſes in her diſcourſe, 'it is really ſurpriſing to ſee theſe little cits, how they mimic people of quality—they muſt be ſo extravagantly in the faſhion—I vow and proteſt the dreſs I tried on Miſs Cordwain to-day, had a train three yards and a half long.'

Henrietta that moment entering the room, Mrs. Willis, ſeeing her couſin was ſurpriſed at her appearance, ſaid, this is the young gentlewoman who wants a place.

The mantua-maker, upon this information, reſumed her familiar look and manner; and throwing herſelf again upon her chair, took a full ſurvey of the young lady, who thanked her, with ſome heſitation, and a bluſh that crimſoned over her face, for the ſervice ſhe had done her.

'I have juſt been telling my couſin,' ſaid Mrs. Meaſure, 'that Miſs Cordwain, the lady I have recommended you to, Ma'am, is very hard to be pleaſed. Her woman muſt look like a lady forſooth: ſhe has refuſed three that went to ſee her place; one, becauſe ſhe had a red hand; it looked, ſhe ſaid, as if the creature had ſtood at a waſh-tub; another, becauſe ſhe went to be hired in a linen gown; and the third, becauſe ſhe had lived with nobody of higher rank than a baronet's wife—But I am ſure ſhe can have no objection to you, Ma'am, unleſs perhaps ſhe may think you too handſome. Do you take ſnuff, Ma'am?' offering her box, which Henrietta civilly declined.

'But dear Ma'am,' purſued the mantua-maker, 'who makes your cloaths? I never ſaw any thing ſo frightful as the ſlope of that ruffle, then ſuch a horrid ſleeve: it is well, you are naturally genteel.'

Henrietta ſlightly bowed in return for this compliment; and aſked her, at what hour it would be proper to wait upon Miſs Cordwain?

'About one o'clock in the forenoon,' replied Mrs.

Meaſure, 'that's her breakfaſt time. Her father, honeſt man, is in his warehouſe before ſix. But this is his only daughter; and he expects ſhe will be a ducheſs, or counteſs at leaſt—She has fifty thouſand pounds.'

'Where does the lady live?' aſked Henrietta.

'Here in one of your filthy lanes,' replied the mantua-maker; 'I forget the name of it, but every body knows Mr. Cordwain the packer.'

She then roſe up, made one of her beſt courteſies, and hurried into a chair that was waiting for her; for this polite mantua-maker was above viſiting her cuſtomers in a hackney coach: and this inſolence was ſuch a proof of her excellence in her buſineſs, that few ever ſcrupled to pay for it.

CHAP. V.

Which ſhews Henrietta in a new Situation.

HENRIETTA having ſummoned all her reſolution, that ſhe might acquit herſelf with propriety of the taſk ſhe had undertaken, prepared the next day to wait upon Miſs Cordwain. She remembered the mantua-maker's hint, and therefore avoided any ſtudied ſimplicity in her dreſs; but no apparel, however mean, could have hid that noble air, or diſguiſed that native elegance, ſo conſpicuous throughout her whole perſon.

As ſoon as ſhe was ready, ſhe ſtepped in to Mrs. Willis's parlour, and, while a coach was ſent for, aſſumed a more than ordinary chearfulneſs in her diſcourſe with the good woman; for ſhe was extremely deſirous of concealing the emotions ſhe felt upon this mortifying occaſion, and affected a moſt heroic indifference, whilſt inly ſhe ſuffered all that a mind, delicate and ſenſible as her's, could feel.

Mrs. Willis followed her to the door with tears in her eyes. The young lady ſtepped into the coach, ſmiled a farewel, and ordered the coachman to drive to Mr. Cordwain's. A few minutes brought her to the houſe; and the ſervant, of whom ſhe enquired if Miſs Cordwain was at home, having ſhewn her into a parlour, bowed and withdrew.

Miſs Cordwain being informed that a lady enquired

for her, ordered her admittance; and the ſame ſervant returning, conducted Henrietta to her dreſſing room.

Miſs Cordwain, who was ſtill lingering over her tea-table with a female acquaintance, roſe up at Henrietta's graceful entrance, and, receiving her with a low courteſy, offered her an arm-chair at the upper end of the room.

Henrietta, conſcious of the error ſhe had committed in not making uſe of the mantua-maker's name before, bluſhed a little at this reception, which was not ſuitable to the character ſhe was to appear in, and, declining the chair; 'Mrs. Meaſure, Madam,' ſaid ſhe. She could utter no more than thoſe two words; but they were ſufficient to give Miſs Cordwain to underſtand her buſineſs.

The haughty citizen was exceſſively ſhocked to find ſhe had been betrayed by the figure of Henrietta into ſo improper an inſtance of reſpect; and that the perſon ſhe took for a lady of diſtinction was the young woman who had been recommended to her ſervice, thought to recover the dignity which ſhe conceived ſhe had loſt from this miſtake, by aſſuming an imperious air and an inſolent accent.

'Who did you live with laſt?' ſaid ſhe to Henrietta, throwing herſelf again into her chair, and glancing her over with a ſupercilious eye; 'I hope it was with a woman of quality: you will not do for me, I can tell you, if you have not been uſed to attend upon perſons of rank.'

Henrietta, notwithſtanding the confuſion ſhe was under at acting ſo ſtrange a part, could not help being diverted with the pride of this daughter of trade.

'I am afraid, Madam,' ſaid ſhe, 'I ſhall not be worthy of your place; for I never lived in the ſervice of any woman of quality, nor indeed in any other.'

'What, you are a gentlewoman, I ſuppoſe,' interrupted Miſs Cordwain, drawling out the word *gentlewoman*; 'and now I remember Meaſure told me you had never been in ſervice. Well, that does not ſignify: I have no objection to your having been a gentlewoman; you may be the better ſervant for what I know. For to

ſay the truth,' ſaid ſhe, addreſſing herſelf to her companion, 'thoſe ſort of poor gentlewomen, when they are reduced, as they call it, to wait upon us, who could buy their whole generation, often know their diſtance better, and are more humble than ſuch as have been bred to ſervice.'

'Oh!' ſaid the other lady, with an applauding ſmile, 'ever while you live, Madam, chuſe a gentlewoman for your maid. There is alderman Pig the grocer's lady: I have heard her often declare ſhe was never ſo well ſerved as when colonel Noble's daughter waited on her. The colonel was killed in the laſt war; and, as thoſe folks you know have ſeldom any thing to leave their families, his fine gay daughters were obliged to go to ſervice after his death, and did very well; but ſomebody left them ten thouſand pounds a piece, and ſpoiled two excellent ſervants, by making them gentlewomen again.'

'Nay, if they had fortunes left them,' replied Miſs Cordwain, 'why you know, then, they had a right to be called gentlewomen.

'Well, child,' purſued ſhe, turning to Henrietta, 'as I told you before I have no objection to your having been a gentlewoman; for I am reſolved never to have any other to wait on me: I ſhall take you upon Meaſure's recommendation, and the ſooner you come the better.'

Henrietta, who had really enjoyed the converſation that had paſſed between theſe two ladies, told her that ſhe would come whenever ſhe pleaſed; and it being agreed ſhe ſhould come the following day, that ſhe might dreſs her new lady for a city-feaſt, ſhe courteſied profoundly low, and withdrew.

Henrietta, whoſe imagination was naturally lively, and not wholly free from thoſe romantic notions which perſons of her age readily admit, began to conſider her transformation from the niece of lady Meadows, and a preſumptive heireſs, into the waiting-maid of a cit, as one of thoſe caprices of fate which never fail to produce ſurpriſing effects. She could not help fancying herſelf the future heroine of ſome affecting tale, whoſe life would

be varied with ſurpriſing viciſſitudes of fortune; and that ſhe would at laſt be raiſed to a rank as much above her hopes, as the ſtation ſhe was now entering upon was below all that her fears had ever ſuggeſted.

But theſe reflections were ſucceeded by others more reaſonable, and which indeed afforded her a more ſolid ſatisfaction: ſhe was going to refute the cenſures of an injurious world; to make that innocence which had been ſo vilely traduced manifeſt, in her chearful ſubmiſſion to poverty and ſervitude, at a time when a ſhining fortune was offered to purchaſe a change in her religious principles, and when perhaps a little diſſimulation, or a temporary compliance with her aunt's propoſals, might reſtore her to a rank in life ſuitable to her birth.

The ſatisfaction ſhe felt from theſe pleaſing ideas, diffuſed ſuch a ſerenity over her fair face, as agreeably ſurpriſed Mrs. Willis, who had waited her return with impatience.

Henrietta repeated to her the dialogue that had paſſed between the two ladies with ſo much humour, and marked the pride of wealth, and aukward affectation of grandeur and diſtinction, in theſe opulent heireſſes to the laborious gains of ſordid thrift, and perhaps ſucceſsful knavery, with ſuch delicate ſtrokes of ſatire as convinced Mrs. Willis ſhe would not be an injudicious obſerver of the manners of thoſe whom it might be her lot to aſſociate with, nor paſs through this new ſcene of life, without drawing improvement from it.

The good woman was grieved to find that ſhe muſt looſe her ſo ſoon; but, being fully perſuaded that this humiliating ſtep would terminate in ſomething happy for her fair friend, ſhe diſpoſed herſelf to part with her chearfully.

It was agreed between them, that the elder Mr. Bale ſhould not be made acquainted with any part of his ſon's behaviour with regard to Henrietta, till his return from Holland, when the whole affair might be laid candidly before him; and that the younger ſhould be told, that ſhe was gone into ſervice; but where, he was not to be informed.

The next day Henrietta, after taking a tender farewel of Mrs. Willis, repaired to her new dwelling. Miſs Cordwain was juſt gone out to make ſome little purchaſes for the evening; and Henrietta, being directed to go into her lady's dreſſing-room, was met by her predeceſſor, who had lingered in the houſe to have an opportunity of ſpeaking to her, that, according to the general cuſtom of ſervants, ſhe might prejudice her againſt her new miſtreſs.

From this girl, who was not ſparing in her invectives, ſhe learned that Miſs Cordwain's temper, which was not naturally good, was extremely ſowered of late by a diſappointment in love; that the packer, her father, had been treating with a certain nobleman for a match between her and the nobleman's eldeſt ſon; but that it had been broke off, becauſe the citizen had refuſed to lay down more than thirty thouſand pounds with his daughter, and the nobleman inſiſted upon forty.

This little piece of hiſtory was followed by a thouſand other family anecdotes; to all which Henrietta liſtened in ſilence, and was not ſorry that the cenſorious waiting-woman, whoſe tongue had, during a whole hour, run with ſurpriſing volubility, was at length ſilenced by the arrival of Miſs Cordwain; whoſe voice when ſhe heard on the ſtairs, ſhe took a haſty leave, and retreated through a different door from that which the lady entered.

Miſs Cordwain, as ſoon as ſhe ſaw Henrietta, ſlightly inclined her head, in return to her reſpectful courteſy; and throwing ſome millinary trifles upon her toilet, ſhe ſat down to her glaſs, and ordered her new woman to comb her hair, ſhewing a fretful impatience at her hair-dreſſer's long delay; for ſhe was to meet her company at nine o'clock, and it was now almoſt four: ſo that ſhe had good reaſon to fear ſhe ſhould hardly have time enough to dreſs.

While Henrietta was acquitting herſelf handily enough of this taſk, her lady took up a collection of ſongs that lay upon her table, that ſhe might improve her mind while her body was adorning; and after reading intently a few moments to herſelf, ſhe haſtily turned over the

leaves to a place that was doubled down, and began to read aloud a moſt piteous complaint of a deſpairing nymph, whoſe lover had forſaken her for another: ſhe concluded this doleful ditty with a deep ſigh; and repeating the burden of it, *for men are as falſe as the changeable wind*, 'Henrietta,' ſaid ſhe, 'was you ever in love?'

Our fair heroine, who underſtood this queſtion as a prelude to a confidence from her miſtreſs, was at ſome loſs how to anſwer it, when ſhe was relieved from her perplexity by the arrival of Monſieur Fineſſe, the French hair-cutter.

Miſs Cordwain, immediately dropping her tender languiſhments, aſſumed a ſupercilious air; and, after haughtily interrogating the ingenious artiſt for not coming ſooner, ſubmitted her treſſes to his forming hands, a ſettled gloom all the time clouding her face: for whether it was that her glaſs, on which her eyes were intently fixed, told her ſome unpleaſing truths, or that her gentle boſom heaved with ſome ſecret diſcontent, but it is certain that every thing diſpleaſed her; nor could all Henrietta's obliging attention to the adorning her perſon draw a ſmile of approbation from her.

After five hours labour, however, the lady was completely dreſſed. Her father, who had not ſeen her ſince dinner, which ſhe had ſwallowed in haſte, having ſo much buſineſs on her hands, now entered the room; and liking the ſhewy appearance ſhe made, 'Why, Jenny,' ſaid he, 'you are as fine as a ducheſs.'

'As fine as a ducheſs,' repeated ſhe, pouting; 'and why not?'

'Very true, girl,' replied the father, 'thou haſt that which can make ducheſſes: but, Jenny, I have ſomething to ſay to thee in private; ſo ſend your waiting-maid away.'

Henrietta immediately retired into her miſtreſs's bedchamber; which being only ſeparated from the dreſſing-room by a ſlight partition of wainſcot, ſhe could not avoid hearing every thing that paſſed.

'I have had a propoſal made me this afternoon,' re-

fumed the father, 'and I came to acquaint you with it, Mr. Traffic has afked you in marriage; there's immenfe riches for you, girl: what fay you?'

'Sure, papa,' cried Mifs Cordwain haftily, 'you have not given him any encouragement, have you? A fine match, indeed! fo I muft be called plain Mrs. Traffic all my days, and there's Mifs Fig married to a vifcount, and has coronets upon her coach: three weeks ago, Mifs Haggle, the broker's daughter, became a countefs; and but this very morning I heard that the duke of Hazard is courting Mifs Steam, our neighbour the foapboiler's niece, and fhe has but twenty thoufand pounds.—I can't bear it; fo, I can't,' purfued Mifs Cordwain, burfting into tears, 'to fee all my comrades at Hackney boarding fchool married to right honourables, and I am not likely to be even a paltry baronet's wife.'

Here her tears and fobs fuppreffed any farther utterance, and had fuch an effect upon the fond father, that he alfo was ready to cry.

'Don't break my heart, Jenny,' faid he, half fobbing; 'you know it is death to me to fee you fret and grieve yourfelf: are you not my only child? is it not for you that I have been toiling and labouring for thefe forty years, up early and down late, fcraping all I can together, gaining much and fpending little, and all to make you a peerefs of Great Britain, and a peerefs you fhall be; fo don't cry, my girl, and fpoil your complexion; neither neighbour Fig, nor neighbour Haggle's daughter, fhall be greater than you. You fhall be a countefs, Jenny, will that content you? I will lay down the odd ten thoufand, that the earl of—— and I quarreled about, and you fhall have his fon.'

'I am obliged to you, papa,' faid Mifs Cordwain; 'but—'

'Nay,' interrupted the father, 'I find nothing will pleafe you: you were crying juft now, becaufe you were not a countefs; and when I tell you that I will part with another ten thoufand pounds, to make you eafy, you come with your buts.'

'Why, ſuppoſe I am a counteſs,' replied Miſs Cordwain, 'will not Miſs Steam be a ducheſs, and take place of me? I can never endure that.'

'What ſignifies her taking place of you,' ſaid her father, 'the duke's eſtate is not half ſo good as the earl of ——; beſides, you refuſed a duke, you know, and you have often told me that you like lord B—— better than any man in the world, and how have you pined ſince the match was broke off!'

'Well, I confeſs,' replied Miſs, 'that I do like my lord B——, and would rather marry him than any duke in the land, provided that little odious thing, Miſs Steam, did not marry above me: ſhe to be called her grace at every word, while I am only lady B——; I ſhould die with vexation.'

'Since it is ſo,' ſaid the father, 'I ſhall lay aſide my deſign, and make no advances to the earl.'

'And then his ſon will marry ſomebody elſe,' cried Miſs Cordwain.

'What would the girl be at?' interrupted the good man, with ſome heat; 'if you wont have him, need you care who has.'

Miſs Cordwain now burſt into a flood of tears: ſhe liked lord B——, but ſhe could not bear the thoughts of Miſs Steam's being in a rank above her; and love and envy raiſed ſuch tumults in her breaſt, as made her ſeek a relief in tears.

'I wiſh you knew your own mind, girl,' ſaid the father half angry, and half concerned at her grief.

'I know my own mind well enough,' replied Miſs, ſullenly: 'I would marry lord B——, and I would not have that proud minx be a ducheſs.'

'Take my word for it,' ſaid the father, 'ſhe will never be ducheſs of Hazard; I know her fortune is not ſufficient to clear the duke's eſtate of two mortgages that have almoſt ſwallowed it up.'

'Nay, then,' interrupted Miſs Cordwain, who eagerly admitted an argument that ſet her mind at eaſe, 'I am ſure the duke will not have her; for ſhe is ſo ugly you

know, papa, that nothing could charm him but her riches.'

'Well,' said the father, smiling with pleasure, to see her in good humour again, 'I am to meet a friend of the earl's to night; shall this affair be brought on again?'

'As you please, papa,' said Miss Cordwain courtesying; 'you know it is my duty to be obedient.'

'Aye,' said the good man, kissing her, 'you have always been one of the most dutiful children in the world; and I will make thee a lady, though I don't leave myself a shilling.' With this wise declaration he quitted the room, leaving his daughter in high spirits; who, after she had called her maid to adjust whatever might be amiss in her dress, and taken a full survey of herself in the glass, stepped into her coach, with the air of a citizen who had a fortune of forty thousand pounds.

CHAP. VI.

Contains an Incident which the sagacious Reader has probably foreseen.

HENRIETTA, when she was left alone, found sufficient matter for reflection in the sentiments and behaviour of this wealthy tradesman and his daughter; and as it was now become necessary for her own peace of mind to reconcile herself to the situation that fortune had placed her in, she endeavoured to extract useful lessons from every scene that passed under her observation.

Why have I lamented my poverty? said she to herself; riches neither give understanding to the mind, nor elegance to the person. How mean is Miss Cordwain with forty thousand pounds! what narrow notions! what selfish passions! how ignorant, how contemptible!—All the advantages her large fortune procures her, is title and a coronet: honours how despicable, when such as Miss Cordwain wears them!

Let me thank Heaven then, that made my father a younger brother; that he inherited the virtues and elevated sentiments of his noble ancestors, and wanted that allurement to upstart wealth, which might have

have given me a Miſs Cordwain for a mother, and have deprived me of thoſe generous precepts, and thoſe bright examples, by which I have been taught to think poverty a leſs evil than diſhonour; and that a peaceful conſcience is cheaply purchaſed with the loſs of every worldly advantage.

Theſe were her reflections, as ſhe afterwards declared to her friend. It is not therefore ſurpriſing that with ſuch ſentiments, our fair heroine found herſelf tranquil in her humble ſtation, and dignified misfortune by her graceful reſignation to it.

If the woman ſhe ſerved had had judgment enough to diſtinguiſh merit, and goodneſs enough to love it, Henrietta muſt have engaged her attention and her kindneſs: but little minds like nothing but what reſembles themſelves.

Miſs Cordwain ſometimes condeſcended to enter into a converſation with her woman, but was quickly diſguſted with the difference of their notions; and what ſhe could not comprehend, ſhe either deſpiſed as folly, or ſuſpected as artifice.

They were upon theſe terms when Mr. Cordwain acquainted his daughter, that they were invited to ſpend a week at the earl of ———'s country-ſeat; for the conteſted ten thouſand pounds being granted by the citizen, the treaty of marriage was renewed; and this viſit was propoſed in order to bring the young people together again with ſome kind of decorum.

Miſs Cordwain, in high ſpirits, gave her woman notice to make preparations for this little journey; which done, Henrietta went to take leave of her faithful Mrs. Willis.

'What a triumph would mine be,' ſaid ſhe to her friend, 'if any of my relations ſhould happen to be at this nobleman's ſeat, and behold me in the character of Miſs Cordwain's ſervant!'

You have done right, my dear,' replied Mrs. Willis, 'to call it a triumph; for ſo indeed it would be, the triumph of virtue over pride and prejudice.'

The good woman informed her, that her guardian was in a very ill ſtate of health, and was gone to Montpelier, in conſequence of his phyſician's advice: that the young man had been there to wait upon her; and that when he heard of the reſolution ſhe had taken, he affected to think himſelf extremely injured by her conduct, as it ſhewed the utmoſt contempt of his advice and friendſhip; but it was eaſy to perceive, added Mrs. Willis, that there was more grief than anger in the reproaches he threw out againſt you upon this occaſion. He ſeemed much mortified at my refuſing to tell him where you was, but owned that his wife made him very uneaſy upon your account; and when I urged that as an argument againſt the propriety of your ſeeing him, his ſilence acknowledged me in the right.

Henrietta was ſenſibly affected with the news of her guardian's illneſs; and, ſince his return was now uncertain, ſhe reſolved to write to him immediately, and give him an account of all that had happened to her ſince he went abroad, fearing that unleſs ſhe explained the reaſons of her conduct, he might be prejudiced againſt her by her aunt's repreſentations of it. She would not give him any diſquiet, by mentioning his ſon's behaviour, but left that to be unravell'd by time.

Mrs. Willis having promiſed to get this letter ſafely tranſmitted to Mr. Bale, Henrietta took a tender leave of her, and returned home.

The next morning very early, the coach and ſix was at the door; Miſs Cordwain impatiently ſtepped in, for ſhe thought every moment an age till ſhe ſaw her noble lover again. Her face dreſſed in ſmiles of pleaſing expectation, and her heart exulting with the conſciouſneſs of her own worth, which, by her father's conceſſion of the diſputed thouſands, and received ſuch a conſiderable addition: but being, as I have before obſerved, not very happy in the frame of her temper, this ſun-ſhine of ſatisfaction was ſoon clouded at being obliged to wait a few minutes for her father, whoſe ſlowneſs but ill ſuited with her eager impatience.

Indeed the wary citizen, having wifely confidered that they had a journey to perform of at leaft twenty miles, was bufied in packing up fome neceffary refrefhments, that they might not be famifhed by the way. For this purpofe he had caufed a neat's tongue, a cake of ginger-bread, two or three pounds of almonds and raifins, and a bottle of fack, to be provided; and he himfelf brought the bafket in which they were depofited to the coach, directing Henrietta to get in firft, that he might place it fafely in her lap; which done, he took his feat next his daughter, and ordered the coachman to drive.

Mifs Cordwain's ill humour infenfibly wearing off, they purfued their journey with great fatisfaction, not having baited above three or four times on the road.

At length the young lady's eyes were delighted with the profpect of the magnificent villa, which fhe expected one day to be miftrefs of; but her attention was foon called off that object by the prefence of her lover, who, being juft returned from a little excurfion on horfeback, alighted as foon as he faw the coach ftop, and advanced to hand his miftrefs out.

The young lord prefented his hand to Mifs Cordwain with an air of forced gallantry; but happening to glance his eyes towards Henrietta, he ftarted back in great furprize.

Mifs Cordwain, vexed at the attention with which he gazed upon her woman, jumped out of the coach, before he had fufficiently recovered himfelf to be able to offer her again the hand, which, in his confufion, he had withdrawn.

The lady having on a cloak, which fhe had wore during the journey, untied it, and, toffing it into the coach to Henrietta, bid her, in an imperious tone, to take care of it.

This action and thefe words gave the young nobleman to underftand that our beauteous heroine was actually the fervant of Mifs Cordwain: a circumftance which furnifhed him with new matter for wonder; and indeed this encounter gave him fo much perplexity, and

ſo entirely engroſſed his thoughts, that the old tradeſman (who enquired after my good lord and my good lady's health, with as many bows and ſcrapes as would have ſerved any trader to expreſs his acknowldgment to a cuſtomer whom he had juſt impoſed upon) was obliged to repeat his queſtions ſeveral times before he could procure an anſwer.

As for Henrietta, ſhe had, upon the firſt ſight of this young nobleman, whom ſhe immediately knew to be the ſame perſon who lodged at Mrs. Eccles's, been under ſome confuſion, leſt he ſhould accoſt her as an acquaintance before the lady on whom ſhe attended; but obſerving that from Miſs Cordwain's behaviour, he underſtood her ſituation, and took no further notice of her than by a ſide glance, which he gave her, full of paſſionate concern, ſhe was relieved from her fears, and, far from being diſcompoſed at the character ſhe appeared in, ſhe acquitted herſelf of the little duties of her ſtation with the moſt graceful eaſe; gave her lady her fan, received her commands, and, with a little French trunk in her hand that contained ſome laces and linen, followed her to the houſe at a reſpectful diſtance.

Lord B———'s emotion at this unexpected meeting with Henrietta, having now in ſome degree ſubſided, he entertained his miſtreſs as they walked with his uſual vivacity and politeneſs, but could not help often turning to ſnatch a look of her fair attendant, whoſe charms in that humble ſtation, a ſtation ſo unworthy of her birth and ſhining merit, acquired a pathetic power that melted him to a tenderneſs he had never known before.

He conducted the lady and her father to the apartment of the counteſs his mother; and, taking the firſt opportunity to leave them, retired to his own, that he might be at liberty to reflect upon his adventure.

To know that the woman, whom all his moſt diligent enquiries for ſo many weeks could never diſcover, was in the ſame houſe with him, was a circumſtance that afforded him infinite ſatisfaction: but he ſaw no probability of turning this circumſtance to the advantage of his deſigns upon her. For, with what face could he

plead his paſſion to one of her delicacy, while he was publicly addreſſing another?

The ſervile condition he ſaw her in was a bar to his hopes. She who, with ſuch uncommon attractions, could reſolve to be poor, muſt needs be incorruptible. What allurement could riches throw out for a woman, who knew no other pride but the pride of virtue?

He could not hope to make an impreſſion upon her heart by the diſguiſe of honourable love. She muſt needs know the terms he was upon with Miſs Cordwain; and was afraid that ſhe already deſpiſed him for the meanneſs of ſuch a choice.

It was indeed ſtill in his power to throw ſuch obſtacles in the way of this match, as to defer, if not break it entirely, but he could not reſolve to make ſuch a ſacrifice to love; he would have married Henrietta with half Miſs Cordwain's fortune, and was amazed at the violence of his paſſion, when he conſidered the prodigious diſproportion between twenty and forty thouſand pounds—Yet moſt ſincerely did he wiſh his generoſity could have been put to this trial; and, in the violence of his grief at the apparent impoſſibility that this ſhould ever happen, a thouſand times did he curſe the malevolence of fate, that united ſo many virtues and graces in one lovely woman, and denied her wealth; which however, by his preference of Miſs Cordwain, he tacitly acknowledged was worth them all.

A whole hour's labour of thought and reflection, left lord B——'s mind in the ſame ſtate of anxious doubt and ſolicitude it was in when he firſt entered upon this examination of his own heart; and all he could be certain of, in this confuſion of ideas and oppoſing ſentiments, was, that the unexpected ſight of Miſs Courteney had charmed him more than ever; and following the impulſe of his paſſion, without knowing whither it would conduct him, or what it would terminate in, he anxiouſly lay in wait for ſome opportunity of ſpeaking to her in private, which he found when he leaſt expected it.

CHAP. VII.

In which our Heroine again appears very foolish.

MEAN time our lovely heroine, who had been received by the countess's woman with prodigious ceremony, and had, during a whole hour, listened with smiling attention to all the impertinences she uttered, was at length relieved from the fatigue of such a conversation, and, with a profusion of compliments, conducted to a chamber contiguous to that of her mistress. As soon as she was left alone, she began to consider how she should extricate herself from the difficulties her unexpected meeting with lord B—— had involved her in.

Her delicacy was shocked at the thoughts of remainin the house with a man who had made an attempt upon her honour, especially in the situation she now was; a situation that would seem to invite his future attacks: and, though he might well impute their meeting to the fantastic effects of chance, yet he would not fail to construe her stay into a tacit encouragement of that passion he had professed for her at parting, the dishonourable purport of which was evident from the engagements he had entered into with Miss Cordwain.

She reflected also on the censures under which her character laboured at present, and was justly apprehensive, that when this part of her story was known, the malicious world would not fail to insinuate that she threw herself into lord B—'s way, and the inference that would be drawn from such a supposed conduct, must needs be highly disadvantageous to her.

But, on the other hand, how could she quit Miss Cordwain's service so abruptly, without giving occasion for strange conjectures, and setting the tongue of malice loose to assign reasons for her behaviour, very different from the truth?

However, the inconveniencies, which might attend this step, were light, compared with those she foresaw from exposing herself voluntarily to the pursuits of a young libertine, whose eyes in this last interview had spoke too plainly to leave her in doubt of his sentiments.

She therefore resolved to go away the next day: and, as soon as she was summoned to the toilet, acquainted Miss Cordwain with her intention.

Henrietta was a scrupulous observer of truth, and would not on this occasion violate it, by forming any plausible excuse for her sudden determination; so that Miss Cordwain, in whose breast the stings of jealousy had been roused by the passionate glances lord B—— had darted at her maid, began to entertain strange suspicions from so unexpected an overture; and, in a peremptory tone, demanded to know her reasons for quitting her service in such a manner.

Henrietta, with great sweetness, assured her that she did not desire to be dismissed in consequence of any discontent, but that the necessity of her affairs obliged her to return immediately to town.

'Your affairs!' said Miss Cordwain, with a haughty sneer; 'I vow it is mighty pretty to hear servants talk of their affairs, as if they really had any concerns of more consequence than the duty they owe their principals. I wonder you don't tell me you have half a dozen engagements in town,' pursued she, laughing aloud; 'such a speech would become you mightily: but prithee, go, creature; pack up your rags in a sheet of brown paper, and take yourself away. I suppose you have found out a new method of living, less mortifying to your pride of beggarly gentility than waiting upon a woman of fortune; and I doubt not but you will be shortly seen flaunting it in public places with a flimsy sack, a painted face, and all the trappings of your trade.'

To this coarse abuse Henrietta listened in silence, beholding her imperious mistress all the time with such a calm, but steady eye, as called up a blush in those cheeks which had been before overspread with a livid paleness.

Not that she felt any remorse for the reproaches she had uttered, or was ashamed of her indecent transports, but Henrietta's soft composure, the dignity of her silence, and the energetic expression in her eyes, struck

a kind of awe into her mean-soul'd adversary; and, inly raging at the inferiority she was conscious of, she commanded her to be gone from her presence.

Henrietta instantly obeyed, and, meeting the countess's woman as she went out of the room, she begged her to send a servant to the nearest inn to hire a post-chaise for her, being resolved to return to London that very day.

This well-bred Abigail expressed great concern that she was so soon to lose the honour of her company; and asked, with an appearance of anxiety, if she was not to return again?

Henrietta replied in the negative, at which the other seemed wonderfully surprised, though she was not ignorant of all that had passed between Henrietta and her lady; for, hearing Miss Cordwain's voice very loud, she had applied her ear to the key-hole, and needed no further information.

Our fair heroine having evaded the artful questions of this prying woman, and discouraged her reflections on her own lady, whom, in her general invective against the pride and caprice of mistresses, she did not spare, told her, she would have the pleasure of viewing the fine gardens that belonged to the house, before she went away; and Mrs. Supple promised to join her, as soon as she had executed the commission she was charged with.

Henrietta accordingly repaired to the gardens, full of reflections upon the scene that had lately passed. She entered a little covered alley that led to a grotto, which she had an inclination to take a view of; when, hearing the sound of steps behind her, she looked back, supposing it was Mrs. Supple; but was not a little surprised to find it was lord B——, who, seeing her cross the terrace from his chamber-window, had followed her thither.

Henrietta, rightly judging that this encounter was not merely accidental, turned her steps from the grotto, and struck into a less private walk. Lord B——, perceiving her intention, crossed immediately and met her, bowing profoundly low, and, with an air as respectful as if he was accosting a duchess, enquired after her health.

Henrietta, not at all flattered by this inſtance of reſpect, which he, by whom it was paid, conſidered as an act of ſupererogation, and that it would affect her accordingly, returned his compliment with the moſt graceful eaſe; and, ſmiling, told him he muſt not now conſider her as Miſs Courteney, but the ſervant of Miſs Cordwain.

'O that horrid appellation!' cried he; What violence did I not do myſelf to behave to you as I did this morning! But tell me, for heaven's ſake, Madam, what has occaſioned this transformation?

'My aunt's continued diſpleaſure,' replied Henrietta; your lordſhip has perhaps heard what circumſtances my father died in: the ſtation therefore in which you ſee me, ought not to be called a transformation; it is what I was born to, ſince I was born in indigence.'

'I cannot bear to hear you talk thus,' interrupted lord B——; 'how could you think of ſubjecting yourſelf to a condition ſo unworthy of you, when you knew there was a man in the world that would have died to ſerve you!'

'I am not of a temper,' ſaid Henrietta, 'to be eaſy under great obligations; and ſervitude is, in my opinion, leſs ſhocking than dependence.'

'Why do you talk of obligations,' ſaid lord B——: love knows no property; could you doubt that my fortune would be at your command. Suffer me, I conjure you,' purſued he, 'to ſnatch you from this unworthy ſituation; can riches be better employed, than in ſupporting her I love?'

'My lord,' interrupted Henrietta, her face glowing with indignation, 'this is an inſult I could not have expected from one of your rank and politeneſs: I am fallen very low, indeed, when a man, who is upon the point of marriage with another, dares talk to me of love.'

'There are certain engagements,' replied lord B——, a little confuſed at the air with which ſhe uttered theſe words, 'in which the heart has no part.

'Very likely,' interrupted Henrietta; 'but it is ſuf-

ficient for me to know, that the engagements your lordship has entered into, leaves you not the liberty of addressing me in this manner: and I look upon the professions you make me as the highest insult upon my distress.'

Lord B——, notwithstanding he found in this justifiable haughtiness the ruin of his hopes, could not help admiring a mind so rightly turned; humble with such propriety, and proud only, when condescension would be meanness.

'This is not a time,' said he, 'to tell you how far I am bound by those engagements you speak of; but, whatever they are, they ought not to deprive me of the happiness of doing you service.'

'I am obliged to you, my lord,' said Henrietta; 'but at present, the greatest service you can do me is to take no notice of me.'

In speaking these words, she courtesied, and would have left him; but he, not able to part with her thus, snatched her hand.

'You must not leave me, said he, 'till you promise to give me an opportunity of speaking to you more fully—Ah, how I love you!' cried he, gazing on her passionately..

'Again, this insulting declaration!' interrupted Henrietta, pulling her hand from him, and giving him a look full of scorn and anger, as she turned away.

'Hear me, Madam,' cried he, pursuing her: 'suffer me, in the character of your friend, to offer you my services. My mother was formerly acquainted with lady Meadows: if it will be of any use to you, I will engage her to renew it, and offer her mediation betwixt your aunt and you. You must not, by heaven you must not, continue longer in so shocking a situation.'

This proposal, and the earnest manner in which it was made, drew Henrietta's attention: angry as she was, she thought it merited a civil return.

'Doubt not my lord,' said she, her charming ey s recovering their usual sweetness, 'that I should be glad
to

to consider you in the character of a friend:' and the offer you now make me is so obliging, that I cannot dispense with myself from telling you my reasons for declining it.'

She then, in a few words, acquainted him with the purport of her aunt's letter to her: 'Such are the terms,' added she, 'upon which a reconciliation with my aunt can be only effected; therefore the countess's interposition in my favour, were she disposed to grant it, would be of no use.'

Lord B——, having before fully informed himself of every thing relating to Miss Courteney, no sooner heard that for so trifling a compliance as the change of her religion it was in her power to secure lady Meadows' estate to herself, which he knew to be very considerable, than he thought fit to alter his style, and declared that the affair between Miss Cordwain and him was not carried so far to take from him the liberty of following his inclinations, and of offering her his hand; he begged her therefore to favour him with another interview in the morning, when he would explain himself further.

Henrietta perceiving the countess's woman approaching, and unwilling to leave him in doubt with regard to her sentiments upon this new proposal, thus answered hastily:

'My lord, this can never be: there are many obstacles against it; you will find it very difficult to surmount those your own family will throw in your way; but, suppose that could be done, my scruples will raise others less easy perhaps to be overcome.'

She left him when she had said these few words, and went to meet Mrs. Supple, who told her she had procured a vehicle for her, and that it would be at the back-gate in less than an hour; but, continued she, there is a strange confusion within, have you seen your lady?

Henrietta told her she had not.

'God knows what is the matter,' said Mrs. Supple; 'she went into the garden to look for you as I imagined, and returned a few minutes ago with a most wrathful

countenance: her father and ſhe confabulated together, and then went into my lord's dreſſing-room; and Mr. Harris, my lord's gentleman, told me that the old man ſeemed to be very uneaſy.'

Henrietta had no time to make any reflections upon what ſhe had heard; for a ſervant that moment came to tell Mrs. Supple, that her lady had ſent him to look for her, and deſired that ſhe would bring Miſs Cordwain's woman to her apartment.

Henrietta, though a little ſurpriſed, followed Mrs. Supple with great chearfulneſs, who deſired her to wait in the anti-chamber, while ſhe went to acquaint her lady with her being there; where we will leave her for a few moments, till the reader is informed of the accident that occaſioned this ſummons.

CHAP. VIII.

Which contains a curious Dialogue between the Earl and the Citizen.

MISS Cordwain, who in the notice lord B—— took of Henrietta, found matter ſufficient for jealouſy and uneaſineſs, entertained the moſt injurious ſuſpicions, when ſhe heard her woman's ſudden reſolution to return to London; and having driven her from her preſence with a torrent of abuſive language, vented her rage in tears as ſoon as ſhe was gone.

She reproached herſelf with her folly, in diſmiſſing her ſo readily; when, by obliging her to ſtay, ſhe might have gueſſed her deſigns, or at leaſt have obtained a more certain knowledge of them.

Her miſchievous imagination being now upon the ſtretch to find ſome expedient for protracting her departure, at laſt preſented her with one which ſhe reſolved to make uſe of.

She hid a diamond bracelet; and then rung her bell for Henrietta, with an intention to tell her, that ſhe could not find it, and inſiſt upon her producing it before ſhe left the earl's.

Mrs. Supple, who was that moment paſſing by her apartment, and knew that Henrietta was not in the way, ſtepped in to know what ſhe wanted. Miſs Cordwain

asked for her woman, and, being told that she was walking in the garden, hastened thither immediately, not more delighted with the opportunity she now had of putting a stop to her journey, than of affronting her with the suspicion of theft.

As she descended the terrace, her eyes were blasted with the sight of her woman at distance in earnest discourse with her lover.

At this confirmation of her suspicions, she ran back like a fury into the house, and meeting her father, who had just left the earl in his dressing-room, told him, that they were invited only to be affronted: that Henrietta was lord B——'s mistress; that he had taken her out of her service; and that she was going back to London that very night at his request.

The old man, without staying to enquire farther, or reflecting upon the extreme improbability of this story, swore that never a lord in the land should use his daughter ill, and strode back to the earl's apartment, while Miss Cordwain retired to her own, meditating vengeance on those that had so cruelly injured her.

Mr. Cordwain, who had promised himself to speak to the earl in very high terms, was no sooner in his presence than he sunk into that littleness, which meer monied men are so conscious of, with persons of birth and politeness. However, he assumed courage enough to tell his lordship that he had something to say to him in private.

The earl, observing that his features were ruffled, was a little surprised; but dismissed his gentleman immediately, though he was not quite dressed, and then, with a complaisant smile, desired the citizen to let him know his commands.

'I am a plain man, my lord,' said Mr. Cordwain, 'I don't understand fine compliments and breeding, though I don't want for manners neither; and I am sure I have always been very civil to your lordship; and I did not expect that your lordship would have invited my girl and I here to scoff at us. My lord, I can give my

girl forty thousand pounds, which is what few lords can say, let me tell you that; and withal I am an honest man, tho' I have forty thousand pounds more in my pocket perhaps: but no matter for that, I am not proud of my riches.'

'Mr. Cordwain,' said his lordship (wondering to what this eloquent harrangue tended) 'I hope nothing has happened to give you any disgust., upon my honour, I have the highest esteem for you, and I think I give a proof of it, by being so desirous of your alliance; but I am at a loss to comprehend your meaning, when you talk of my having invited you and your daughter here to affront you. Miss Cordwain is a most accomplished young lady, and my son has too much judgment not to be as sensible as he ought of her merits.'

'Indeed,' interrupted Mr. Cordwain, 'my daughter is in my eye a very comely young woman; and I will never give her to any man, though he were a duke or a prince, that would keep a mistress under her nose, as one may say.'

'You astonish me, Mr. Cordwain,' replied his lord-lordship; 'have you any reason to suspect that my son is a libertine?'

'My lord,' returned Mr. Cordwain, 'I'am no scholar, I don't understand hard words; I have had learning enough to scrape a few thousands together, and that is sufficient for me. Your lordship's son may be a libertine for what I can tell, that's neither here nor there; but I am sure he is a terrible rake: and what tender father,' pursued he, almost in tears, 'would marry his child to a rake, to have all the fruits of his toil and labour, for thirty years and upwards, squandered away upon lewd women?'

'Sure! Mr. Cordwain,' interrupted his lordship, with a sterner accent, 'you do not imagine my son capable of acting so dishonourably, his principles, Mr. Cordwain ——'

'Nay, nay, my lord,' resumed the citizen, 'I have nothing to say against his principles; he is no Jacobite, I dare engage: but he is a rake, my lord, that is my

objection to him, and rakes are very bad husbands.'

'My son,' said the peer, 'may have had some youthful follies; but I am sure Miss Cordwain's beauty and good sense will fix his heart.'

'And does your lordship really think my girl a beauty?' said the fond father, his eyes glistening with pleasure. 'Indeed I always thought so; but fathers, my lord, are apt to be partial.'

'She is both beautiful and witty,' replied his lordship, who found every excellence in forty thousand pounds.

'Nay, as for her wit,' said Mr. Cordwain, 'I am the best judge of that, who have seen her growing up under my eye. She took her learning surprisingly, my lord, and by that time she was ten years old, she had read her Psalter quite through. Would it not grieve one then, continued he, to part with such a girl as this to one that will slight her, and keep mistresses?'

'Do me the favour, Mr. Cordwain,' said his lordship, 'to acquaint me with your reasons for suspecting that my son will keep a mistress, though he should be so happy as to have Miss Cordwain for a wife?'

'Why, you must know, my lord,' replied the citizen, looking extremely wise, 'that I have made a discovery; and your son is actually carrying on an intrigue with my daughter's maid.'

'Sure this must be some mistake,' cried the peer.

'No, no, my lord,' answered Cordwain, it is no mistake, I am very sure of it.'

'And you have discovered this intrigue, you say,' resumed his lordship: 'pray when, and by what means, did you discover it?

'About half an hour ago,' replied Mr. Cordwain; 'my daughter told me of it.'

'Oh! then it was your daughter that discovered it,' said his lordship, smiling a little at the old man's absurdity.

'Ay, ay, my lord,' cried he, construing that smile into an acknowledgment of his daughter's sagacity. 'I told your lordship she did not want for wit.'

'But Miſs Cordwain is certainly miſtaken now,' ſaid the peer; 'this is ſome pretty frowardneſs, a love-quarrel; depend upon it we ſhall find it ſo: however, I will talk to my ſon, and I'll engage the counteſs to diſcourſe your daughter upon this matter. Come, Mr. Cordwain, we who are the parents of theſe young people know their true intereſt better than they do, and muſt endeavour to make up this little breach between them. I will make an end of dreſſing,' purſued his lordſhip, bowing low to the cit, 'and join you in the garden a quarter of an hour hence, when I hope to clear up this affair to your ſatisfaction.'

Mr. Cordwain immediately withdrew; and the peer having ſtepped to his lady's apartment to acquaint her with this ſtrange ſtory, left it to her to manage Miſs Cordwain, and went in queſt of his ſon, who, when Henrietta left him, had retired to his ſtudy, and was revolving in his mind a ſcheme, which, by reconciling his intereſt to his love, would gratify all his wiſhes.

CHAP. IX.

In which Henrietta has an interview with the counteſs.

THE counteſs, like a diſcreet matron, was reſolved to ſee the young woman, of whom Miſs Cordwain entertained a jealouſy, that ſhe might by wholeſome counſels fortify her againſt ſeduction; for ſhe ſuppoſed that this ſuſpicion took its riſe from the girl's being pretty, and perhaps ſome little unmeaning gallantry of her ſon's, who, like all other young men, admired beauty wherever he found it.

She was willing alſo to know certainly whether Miſs Cordwain's fears were only imaginary, that ſhe might the better effect a reconciliation between the lovers; for ſhe paſſionately deſired the completion of a match that would put her ſon into poſſeſſion of forty thouſand pounds.

When Mrs. Supple appeared in conſequence of her ſummons, and told her that Mrs. Henrietta waited her ladyſhip's commands, the counteſs aſked her what ſort of a young woman ſhe was?

Mrs. Supple replied, that ſhe was an aukward ſort of

a body, mightily conceited of her beauty ſhe believed; and Heaven knows, added ſhe; ſhe has not much to boaſt of.

'Well; tell her to come in,' ſaid the counteſs, beginning to believe, from this account of her, that Miſs Cordwain's fears were not without foundation; for vanity, ſhe well knew, was the great underminer of chaſtity, from the ducheſs down to the chamber-maid.

When Henrietta entered the room, the counteſs, who expected to ſee a very different perſon, was ſo ſtruck with her beauty, and the dignity of her air, that ſhe roſe from her ſeat, and returned the graceful courteſy ſhe made her with a complaiſance that ſurpriſed her own woman, who, being ordered by her lady to leave the room, inſtantly obeyed, but went no farther than the door, where ſhe ſtood liſtening, and heard all that paſſed.

'You appear to me,' ſaid the counteſs to Henrietta, with an engaging ſmile, 'to deſerve ſo little the ſuſpicions that are entertained of you, that I really know not how to mention them to you, though it was for that purpoſe I ſent for you hither.'

Henrietta was a little ſurpriſed at this beginning; but conſcious of the integrity of all her actions, ſhe was wholly free from any apprehenſions that could diſcompoſe her.

'I know not, Madam, ſaid ſhe, the nature of thoſe ſuſpicions which I have incurred, but I am very ſure I have no guilt to reproach myſelf with, which ſhould make me fear to ſtand the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny.'

'Upon my word I believe you,' ſaid the counteſs, charmed with the noble confidence of her anſwer, and the graceful manner in which it was delivered; 'and it muſt be my ſon's imprudence that has given occaſion for Mr. Cordwain's ſuſpicions.'

The counteſs was too delicate to make uſe of Miſs Cordwain's name upon this occaſion; but Henrietta in an inſtant comprehended the whole myſtery, and was now able to account for the injurious language that lady had given her.

'Own freely to me,' purſued the counteſs, ſmiling,

'has not my ſon been a little troubleſome to you, and talked to you of love and ſuch idle ſtuff?'

'It is ſome mortification to me, Madam,' replied Henrietta, bluſhing, 'to own that I have been affronted in the manner your ladyſhip mentions: however, it is certainly true, lord B—— has thought me weak enough to be dazzled with his profeſſions.'

'Then you have ſeen my ſon often,' ſaid the counteſs.

Henrietta, who thought it behoved her to be very explicit on this occaſion, related to the counteſs the manner of her becoming acquainted with lord B——, his concealing himſelf in her chamber, and his behaviour afterwards.

'I did not know his lordſhip's name,' purſued ſhe; 'and though I often heard him mentioned at Mr. Cordwain's, yet as I had no reaſon to ſuſpect that he was the ſame young nobleman, whom I had ſuch reaſon to avoid, I made no ſcruple to attend Miſs Cordwain hither.'

'I am very much concerned,' ſaid the counteſs, 'to hear this account of my ſon; it was a very ſhocking attempt. So you have acquainted your miſtreſs with what happened?'

'No, Madam,' anſwered Henrietta, 'that was not neceſſary; but when I diſcovered that lord B—— was the perſon who had treated me ſo freely, I deſired Miſs Cordwain to diſmiſs me, becauſe I did not chuſe to throw myſelf in his way.'

'That was very prudently reſolved,' ſaid the counteſs: 'and when are you to leave Miſs Cordwain?'

'Immediately, Madam,' replied Henrietta; 'I have provided myſelf with a poſt-chaiſe to return to London, and I believe it is now waiting for me.'

'Certainly!' ſaid the counteſs (after a little pauſe) 'this ſudden reſolution of your's muſt ſurpriſe Miſs Cordwain. What did ſhe ſay when you acquainted her with it?'

'She was extremely angry, Madam,' replied Henrietta, 'and ſaid many ſevere things to me, at which I was then aſtoniſhed; but if Miſs Cordwain entertained

any unfavourable suspicions of me, her behaviour may be accounted for.'

'Since you have not acquainted her,' said the countess, 'with my son's rude attempt upon you, what reason could she have to suspect you?'

'I know of none, Madam,' answered Henrietta, 'except his lordship's speaking to me in the garden a little time ago, may have come to her knowledge.'

'You have shewn so much candor in your answers to my questions,' resumed the countess, 'that I am persuaded you will tell me frankly the subject of my son's discourse to you in the garden.'

'I was born to suffer indignities, Madam,' said Henrietta, her cheeks glowing with indignation: 'My lord B——, though he must know that I was not ignorant of his honourable passion for Miss Cordwain, yet dared to affront me with the mention of his love.'

The countess was a little surprised at this sally, which escaped Henrietta in the warmth of her resentment, when she recalled to her remembrance a declaration, which she looked on as the highest insult, since lord B—— was acquainted with her birth. Had the countess known that it was the niece of the earl of ——, who expressed herself in such lofty terms, she would have admired that becoming pride, which suggested them; but in the waiting-maid of Miss Cordwain, it appeared absurd and ridiculous, and she was ready to suspect her of artifice and dissimulation.

But when she cast her eyes upon Henrietta, and saw the emotion with which she was agitated, the deep blush that glowed on her cheeks, and the tears that trembled in her eyes, she reproached herself with the injustice she was guilty of, in so soon admitting doubts of her innocence.

Henrietta, supposing from the silence of the countess, that she had no more to say to her, courtsied to her respectfully, and was about to withdraw.

'You must not go,' said that lady, in an obliging accent, 'till I know whether it is in my power to serve you. You have thrown up Miss Cordwain's service upon

my ſon's account, it is but juſtice therefore that I ſhould procure you another; if you are not provided for, I will recommend you to my ſiſter, ſhe will either take you herſelf, or ſettle you with another lady.'

The counteſs, in making this offer, had another view beſides ſerving Henrietta. She was not willing to loſe ſight of her, for ſhe rightly judged that with ſo many charms in her perſon, and an underſtanding far above what was generally found in perſons of her rank, this young woman was very likely to inſpire a ſolid paſſion; and ſhe dreaded leſt her ſon ſhould be ſo far captivated by her as to neglect the advantageous match that was now offered him.

If ſhe placed her with her ſiſter, or with any of her friends, it would not be eaſy, ſhe thought, for her ſon to get acceſs to her; for if he reſolved to continue his purſuit, his deſigns, whatever they were, would be known ſoon enough to be prevented.

Henrietta penetrated no further into the counteſs's ſentiments, than what ſerved to give her a high idea of her benevolence. She accepted her offer wich expreſſions of the deepeſt gratitude; and this the lady conſidering as a proof of her ſincerity and right intentions, ſhe, in the billet which ſhe gave her for her ſiſter, recommended her in very obliging terms to her favour.

Henrietta again politely thanked her, and, receiving the billet, upon which there was a full direction, ſhe went out of the counteſs's chamber, with an intention to depart immediately.

Mrs. Supple, whom ſhe found in the antichamber, informed her, that her chaiſe was waiting for her at the gate; upon which Henrietta took leave of her, and deſcended the back-ſtairs, but was ſuddenly ſtopped by Mr. Cordwain, who had followed her, and, ſeizing her rudely by the arm, charged her with having robbed his daughter.

CHAP. X.

Contains a discovery which it is hoped the reader will not be displeased with.

'GOOD Heaven!' exclaimed Henrietta, in the utmost astonishment, 'what can this mean?'

'Look you child,' said the citizen, 'my daughter tells me you have stole her diamond bracelet: any body but myself would send you to prison directly: but I am tender-hearted, and consider, that though I could hang you for this robbery, yet that would be poor satisfaction for such a loss: therefore in compassion I will spare your life, provided you immediately restore the bracelet.'

Henrietta had by this time collected her scattered spirits, and comprehended the motive of this malicious accusation.

'May I not see Miss Cordwain, Sir?' said she in a composed accent; 'I am pretty sure that I can convince her she wrongs me greatly by this strange suspicion.'

'See her! what should you see her for?' replied the old man, 'unless you will give me back the bracelet: you must not think to move her with your whining; her intreaties shall not save you if you are obstinate; so look to it: but come, perhaps you will have the grace to repent, and return the bracelet; come along.'

Saying this, he pulled her up stairs, and led her, with no great complaisance, into his daughter's chamber, who sat exulting in her successful mischief, and the disgrace she had fixed upon the creature that presumed to rival her; a blush however dyed her cheeks at the sight of Henrietta, who, with a look that at once expressed the highest contempt of her mean accuser, and calm confidence in her own untainted innocence, asked her how she had so far offended her as to make her seek her life?

'Offended me, creature?' said Miss Cordwain; 'have you the assurance to imagine that I am uneasy because—because—You vain saucy flirt—who told you that I could be jealous of you? And so you suppose—but you shall produce my bracelet.'

'Ay, that she shall,' cried the citizen; 'I wish we

were in town, I would carry her before alderman Greygoose immediately. Come, girl, don't be a fool, but deliver up the bracelet, for this is a hanging matter, let me tell you.'

'Do you really propose, Madam?' said Henrietta, looking on Miss Cordwain with a most contemptuous smile, 'to go through with this malicious accusation? and are you resolved to perjure yourself, and swear that I have got your bracelet?'

'What does the creature mean!' interrupted Miss Cordwain, colouring.

'My meaning is,' said Henrietta, 'that your bracelet is certainly in your own possession; and that you pretend to have lost it only to fix a scandal upon me.'

'O my God!' cried Miss Cordwain, putting her hand to her head; 'the excessive insolence of this wench affects me so, I believe I shall faint.—Dear papa, let her go about her business, I had rather lose ten bracelets than suffer so much uneasiness. Dear Sir, let her go, one time or other she will meet with her deserts. She will not stop at this theft, but somebody else may bring her to justice; I will have nothing more to do with her.'

'Base woman!' cried Henrietta, almost choaked with rage. 'No, I will not take the liberty you offer me: have our laws, think you, no punishment for a calumny like this, that strikes at life as well as reputation? You shall be forced to prove your charge, and my fame shall be cleared to your everlasting confusion.'

Miss Cordwain, conscious of her guilt, and apprehensive of the consequences of what she had done, knew not what answer to make to this menace. As for the citizen, he stared with stupid wonder upon the injured fair one; for the extraordinary emotion she was in, gave such vehemence to her utterance, and such fire to her eyes, that he even trembled, as if in the presence of some superior being. But poor Henrietta, after this sudden sally of rage, found her heart so oppressed with the indignity she had suffered, that she burst into a violent passion of tears.

Miſs Cordwain was ready to renew her inſults; when ſhe found her ſo mortified, and her father being recovered from his panic, again urged her to reſtore the bracelet; when a ſervant came in, and informed them, that dinner was going to be ſerved, and that his lord and lady expected them in the dining-room.

Miſs Cordwain immediately obeyed the ſummons, for ſhe dreaded the concluſion of this affair. When ſhe entered the room, the counteſs, who knew nothing of what had happened, ſeeing her look very pale, aſked her, if ſhe was well? and lord B——, who had promiſed his father to cure her jealouſy by redoubled aſſiduity for the future, approached, and, with a well counterfeited tenderneſs, expreſſed his concern for her indiſpoſition.

Miſs Cordwain, who had been aſſured by her father that the earl earneſtly deſired the match between his ſon and her ſhould go forward, reſolved not to protract it by any ſhew of reſentment at what was paſt, and therefore received his little aſſiduities with all the complaiſance ſhe was miſtreſs of; but deſirous of mortifying him in the perſon of her who had ſo greatly attracted his notice, as well as to give him an opinion of the ſoftneſs of her diſpoſition, ſhe told him, that indeed ſhe was prodigiouſly diſcompoſed; that her maid had robbed her; 'and my father,' added ſhe, 'threatens the poor wretch with a proſecution, and I was weak enough to be exceſſively ſhocked with her blubbering.'

'Has your maid robbed you, Miſs?' ſaid the counteſs, extremely ſurpriſed.

'She has ſtolen a diamond bracelet from me this very morning, Madam,' replied Miſs Cordwain.

'Impoſſible!' cried lord B——, in a tranſport that deprived him of all conſideration; 'Miſs Courteney could not be guilty of any thing mean or ſcandalous,'

Theſe words were ſcarce uttered, when he diſcovered and repented of his indiſcretion; but it was now too late to repair it.

'Miſs Courteney!' repeated Miſs Cordwain, reco-

vering from her ſurpriſe; 'who is Miſs Courteney, my lord?'

The counteſs, perceiving her ſon was embarraſſed, endeavoured to relieve him, by aſking Miſs Cordwain ſome queſtions concerning her loſs; but that young lady would not be diverted from her queſtion.

'This creature has a variety of names, I ſuppoſe, ſaid ſhe: ſhe hired herſelf to me by the name of Benſon, and Courteney it ſeems is that ſhe has been formerly known by. Sure I have been very unfortunate to get ſuch a wretch to attend me.'

'Madam,' ſaid lord B——, again thrown off his guard by his indignation at hearing a woman of Henrietta's merit ſo groſly abuſed, 'you don't know who you are ſpeaking of?'

'Why, do you know?' ſaid the earl to his ſon, in an accent that ſhewed how extremely he was diſpleaſed with his imprudence.

'Yes, my lord (replied he) I do; and Madam,' purſued he, addreſſing himſelf to Miſs Cordwain, 'I am ſure you will have candor enough to excuſe my engaging with ſome warmth in defence of the unfortunate young lady, who is now your ſervant, when you ſhall know that ſhe is the niece of the earl of ——; and that it is her firm attachment to the religion ſhe was brought up in, which hinders her from ſucceeding to a very large eſtate, and makes it neceſſary for her to go to ſervice for a ſubſiſtence.'

This account brought tears into the eyes of the counteſs, who inly applauded herſelf for her diſcernment in the favourable ſentiments ſhe conceived for Henrietta before ſhe knew who ſhe was.

The earl appeared moved, and was beginning to aſk his ſon ſome queſtions concerning this fair unfortunate, when Miſs Cordwain fetched a deep ſigh, and fell back in her chair.

Rage at this diſcovery of her rival's birth and extraordinary merit, and terror, leſt the ſcandalous accuſation ſhe had forced againſt her, ſhould end in her own diſ-

grace, operated so powerfully upon her spirits, that she fainted away.

While the countess supported her, lord B—— rang the bell very deliberately for assistance; and the earl, not much concerned at an accident, which he imputed to a jealousy that proved her passion for his son, took that opportunity to remind him that it was his interest to improve the affection this young woman had for him.

The countess, who had in vain searched her pockets for a smelling-bottle, ordered a servant, who appeared at the summons of the bell, to bring one off her toilet; when Mr. Cordwain entered the room, and, seeing his daughter in that condition, made but one step from the door to the place where she sat, exclaiming, 'Oh! my child, what ails my child? is she dead?'

'Don't be alarmed,' said the countess, 'it is only a fainting fit, she will recover presently.'

Lord B——, who was ashamed to appear wholly inactive upon this occasion before his designed father-in-law, had presence of mind enough to take a decanter of water from the side-board, and sprinkle some of it on Miss Cordwain's face.

This remedy was applied so successfully, that she immediately opened her eyes, but the first object they met had like to have closed them again: for her father, hearing a smelling-bottle called for, remembered that she always carried one or two about her, and, searching her pockets with trembling haste, pulled out, with a smelling-bottle, the bracelet which she had concealed there, as a place where it was likely to be most secure, being subject to no search but her own.

The old man made none of those reflections upon this accident, which were obvious enough to every one else; but, perceiving his daughter was beginning to recover, presented the bracelet, instead of the smelling bottle to her, conceiving the former to be the best restorative.

'See, child!' cried he, in a transport, 'I have found your bracelet—come, you must be well now—I don't wonder you was grieved: truly it would have been a great loss.'

Miſs Cordwain flattered herſelf from the words *I have found your bracelet*, that her father had had wit enough to ſave her from any reproach, by giving ſome favourable turn to the diſcovery; but in this ſhe greatly overrated his abilities.

'And where doſt think I found it, child?' purſued the old man: 'even in thy own pocket, as all the company can witneſs.'

'Very true;' ſaid lord B——, maliciouſly.

'Was it found in my pocket?' ſaid Miſs Cordwain. 'Why then, to be ſure, I pulled it off with my glove this morning, and forgot it: I proteſt I am ſorry there has been ſo much noiſe made about it.'

'It is a pity indeed,' ſaid the counteſs, 'conſidering who the perſon is that was ſuppoſed to have ſtolen it.'

'O la! papa,' cried Miſs Cordwain, 'you don't know that my maid Henrietta is diſcovered to be a great lady. Upon my word it is true,' purſued ſhe, ſeeing him look ſurpriſed.

'I am ſorry to hear that,' ſaid the citizen, rubbing his forehead; 'for if ſhe has friends who will ſupport her, ſhe may commence a ſuit againſt me for Scandalum Magnatum, and what a power of money may I loſe— See what comes of your heedleſſneſs, girl, I proteſt I don't know what to do.'

The counteſs, though ſhe was vexed at the vulgar ſarcaſm of the daughter, was nevertheleſs deſirous of freeing the old man from his uneaſineſs, as well as to have an excuſe for viſiting the injured young lady.

'I am perſuaded,' ſaid ſhe, 'that Miſs Courteney's delicacy will prevent her from ſeeking any public reparation for the affront ſhe has ſuffered; but I will ſee her myſelf, and, if neceſſary, diſſuade her from taking any reſolution to your prejudice.'

Lord B——, who was talking to his father at a diſtant window, hearing this propoſal, approached, and, by a look which he gave the counteſs, his mother, ſeemed to beſpeak her utmoſt tenderneſs and complaiſance to the afflicted fair one.

Mr. Cordwain thanked her heartily for her kindneſs.

'But, Odso! Madam, cried he, stopping her as she was going out, 'I beg your ladyship's pardon, you must take the key up with you,' continued he, 'fumbling in his pockets, and at last pulling it out; 'for when I came down, I locked the door for fear the bird should fly away'.' With these words, he gave the countess the key, smiling and nodding his head in applause of his own sagacity.

The countess was extremely shocked to hear of this new indignity which the poor young lady had suffered, but she dissembled her concern, and silently withdrew.

Lord B—— again stole to a window to hide his emotions; and the earl, though greatly disgusted with the behaviour of both father and daughter, yet approached them with a complaisant air, and congratulated the latter on the recovery of her jewel.

Thus did these noble persons accommodate themselves to the manners of those whom they in secret despised; and, for the sake of a few paltry thousands, shewed the utmost solicitude to associate plebeian meanness in the honours of a noble ancestry, and to give title, rank, precedence, to one who would disgrace them all.

CHAP. XI.

Henrietta returns to London.

THE countess, who was greatly affected with the cruel usage Henrietta had received, could with difficulty restrain her tears when she entered the room where the fair prisoner was confined: that air of distinction which she had observed in her before she knew her birth, seemed now more remarkable, and made the humiliating condition to which she was reduced, a subject of painful reflection to lady ——, who approached her with a look of tenderness and pity, and, taking her hand,

'I scarce know how to speak to you (said she) about an affair that Miss Cordwain has much more reason to be ashamed of than you. She has found her bracelet.'

Henrietta was a little surprised at the kind and familiar manner in which the countess accosted her; but still pre-

serving that distant respect, which was due from the character she had assumed to a lady of her rank, she courtesied profoundly low, and thanked her for the honour she did her in condescending to bring this grateful piece of news herself.

'I must tell you also,' said the countess, 'that I am not ignorant of your name and family, nor of your motives for submitting to go to service; for which you deserve to be esteemed and admired by all the world. It was my son that betrayed your secret,' pursued the lady, observing that Henrietta looked surprised; 'I will not ask you now how you came to intrust him with it, some other time you shall, if you please, tell me all your story. I have now only leisure to assure you, that I am your sincere friend, and that I will serve you with all the interest I have in any way you shall desire.'

Henrietta, after making a proper acknowledgment for this kind declaration, told the countess, that being determined to continue the way of life she had entered into, till her relations of themselves thought proper to alter it, the recommendation her ladyship had given her to her sister, was the greatest service she could possibly desire, and would be ever most gratefully remembered.

'I admire your resolution,' said the countess; 'but I am grieved to think you should be in a situation so unworthy of you; something must be done to extricate you from it.'

'I beg, Madam,' said Henrietta, 'that your ladyship's kind concern for me may not lead you to take any steps in my favour with my relations. No;' pursued she, with some warmth, 'their unnatural behaviour to me deserves the neglect I shew them, in not soliciting their assistance. I have already got over all those little passions and prejudices which might hinder me from being easy with my humble lot; and I freely confess to you, Madam, that I find a secret pleasure in the thoughts of mortifying the pride of my lord ——, when some accident (for an accident it must be) shall shew him his niece in the quality of a servant.

'Consent at least,' said the countess, 'to my acquaint-

ing my ſiſter with your birth, that ſhe may endeavour to place you in ſuch a manner as will be moſt agreeable to you.'

'I do not wiſh, Madam, to be known to the perſon I ſerve,' replied Henrietta; 'and I deſire to have no other conſideration ſhewn me than what my behaviour in the ſtation I am placed in ſhall merit.'

'Well,' ſaid the counteſs, 'it ſhall be as you would have it; but I cannot expreſs to you how much I eſteem and admire you—You may judge of my good opinion of you, when I tell you, that as to what regards my ſon's paſſion for you, I depend entirely upon your candor and generoſity. You know our views for him; and this is all I ſhall ſay.'

'I am obliged to you, Madam,' ſaid Henrietta, 'for the confidence you repoſe in me; I will endeavour to deſerve it. And now, Madam,' purſued ſhe, ſmiling, 'ſince my impriſonment is at an end, I will, with your ladyſhip's permiſſion, ſet out immediately for London; the chaiſe I had hired is, I ſuppoſe, ſtill waiting for me. I hope to have the honour of preſenting your letter to lady C—— to-morrow or next day at fartheſt.

'Take my kindeſt wiſhes along with you,' ſaid the counteſs, kiſſing her, and taking a diamond ring from her finger: 'wear this for my ſake,' ſaid ſhe, giving it to Henrietta; 'the intrinſic value of it is but ſmall, but I hope you will conſider it as a mark of my eſteem for you.'

'The counteſs went out of the room as ſoon as ſhe had ſpoke theſe words, leaving Henrietta extremely affected with her kindneſs; and all obſtacles to her journey being now removed, ſhe haſtened to the gate, placed herſelf in her poſt-chaiſe which ſhe found waiting, and in a few moments was out of ſight.

Mean time, the counteſs returned to her company, and told Mr. Cordwain, ſmiling, that he had nothing to fear from Henrietta's vindictive reſolutions. Upon which, Miſs Cordwain ſaid, ſhe would go up to her, and make her an apology for what had happened; but dinner was that moment ſerved, which made it not neceſſary for the

counteſs to tell her that Henrietta was gone, in order to prevent her intended civility: but as ſoon as a proper opportunity offered, ſhe took care to let the young lady know, that her ſuſpicions of Henrietta were very ill grounded; that ſhe was perfectly virtuous; and likely to remain in the obſcure condition of a ſervant, unleſs her relations, who were perſons of rank and fortune thought proper to do ſomething for her.

She added, in order to remove all her uneaſineſs, that ſhe had recommended her to a lady who would procure her a place, which was the leaſt ſhe could do for a young woman of her birth, in ſuch unhappy circumſtances.

Miſs Cordwain was very well ſatisfied with what the counteſs had done; being perſuaded, that ſince ſhe was ſo deſirous the treaty between lord B—— and her ſhould go forward, that ſhe would take care to hinder any thing from happening on the part of Henrietta, that might give her cauſe for diſguſt.

But poor lord B—— was in a truly pitiable ſituation: he was in love with the perſon of Henrietta, and the fortune of Miſs Cordwain; and theſe different paſſions by turns equally poſſeſſed him, ſo that it was impoſſible for him to form any fixed reſolution.

When he reflected on the ſolid advantage that would accrue to him from a marriage with the packer's daughter, ſuch as being enabled to play as high at Arthur's as my lord ——, to bring as many race-horſes to New-Market as ——, to have as ſplendid equipages as the earl of ——, and ſeveral others, which make the envy and emulation of many of our preſent race of nobles, he was ready to ſacrifice his inclination to motives ſo juſt, ſo reaſonable, ſo meritorious.

But when the image of Henrietta roſe to his thoughts; her perſon ſo lovely, her manners ſo elegant. her birth not beneath his own, her virtue ſo eminent; how could he think of putting ſuch a treaſure out of his reach, by marrying her deſpicable rival! And indeed, ſo juſt were his notions of this treaſure, and ſo high his value of it, that, provided any method could be found to reconcile her to her aunt, and ſecure to her the ſucceſſion of her

eſtate, he would willingly have renounced his pretenſions to Miſs Cordwain, and have married Henrietta; though her fortune, as heireſs of lady Meadows's eſtate, would be ſome thouſands leſs than Miſs Cordwain's.

Such a proof of diſintereſtedneſs, he thought, muſt needs be very grateful to a young woman of Henrietta's fine underſtanding and enlarged ſentiments; and, having brought himſelf to this point, his next care was to procure a private interview with her, that he might acquaint her with his deſigns, and engage her concurrence with them.

But this ſcheme being defeated by her ſudden departure, which he learned from his mother, he was plunged into new perplexity and uneaſineſs. He aſked the counteſs, with an air of indifference and unconcern, where ſhe was gone, and how ſhe intended to diſpoſe of herſelf? But that diſcerning lady, who obſerved his ſudden emotion at the news of Henrietta's departure, would give him no other ſatisfaction than telling him, that ſhe ſuppoſed ſhe would again go to ſervice; for ſhe ſeemed to have no expectations of any favour from her relations.

Lord B—, after a little reflection, comforted himſelf with a hope, that ſome accident or other would again throw her in his way; and that the diſguſt ſhe muſt neceſſarily entertain, to a way of life ſo unworthy of her, would induce her to embrace his honourable propoſals: for ſuch he conceived them to be, ſince all the ſacrifice he ſhould expect from her, was a temporary compliance with her aunt's inclinations with regard to religion: but however, he thought it would be prudent not to break off with Miſs Cordwain, becauſe in her fortune he would always find wherewithal to comfort himſelf, if he was diſappointed in his love.

In purſuance of this wiſe reſolution, he behaved in ſuch a manner to that lady, as gave her no cauſe to be diſpleaſed with him; ſo that every thing in this noble family, and their deſigned allies, was upon the ſame footing as before Henrietta, with miſchief-making beauty, came in the way.

BOOK IV.

CHAP. I.

Atheists have been but rare, since Nature's birth;
'Till now she-atheists ne'r appear'd on earth.
Ye men of deep researches, say, whence springs
This daring character in timorous things!
Who start at feathers, from an insect fly,
A match for nothing—but the Deity.

YOUNG'S UNIVERSAL PASSION.

MEAN time our fair heroine, having performed her little journey without any unfortunate accident, arrived late in the evening at the house of her friend Mrs. Willis, who, in her astonishment at her sudden return, asked her a hundred questions in a breath.

Henrietta satisfied her eager curiosity with a succinct detail of all that had happened to her that day, which had indeed been a very busy one.

The honest heart of Mrs. Willis was variously affected with the different parts of her story. She wept for her sufferings: she execrated the malicious Miss Cordwain; she praised the countess; and was exceedingly solicitous about the purport of lord B——'s designs, which, from what she had heard of his behaviour, appeared to her very mysterious. But Henrietta, who had a thorough contempt for that young lord, declared, that although he should break with Miss Cordwain, and address her upon honourable terms, yet she could not bring her heart to approve of him.

'He is mean, said she, and sordid in his temper. His principles are bad: he is a lord, but he is not a gentleman; and I am sure I could never esteem him. Besides the countess, who is more alarmed about the sentiments he has for me than I think she has reason, depends upon my honour not to encourage any overtures from him, and I will not abuse her confidence.

'It is easy, pursued she, smiling, to be just when our own inclinations do not oppose it. I shall pretend to no merit in making this sacrifice, if ever it be in my

power to make it; because in reality it will not be a great one. If riches and ſplendor could have made me happy, I would have married Sir Iſaac Darby; for it was not his age that I objected to moſt, but thoſe qualities and manners which made his age contemptible.'

'But, ſurely, my dear,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, your gratitude would be engaged, ſhould lord B——, in the preſent inequality of your circumſtances, make you an offer of his hand.'

'Not at all,' replied Henrietta, with ſome warmth: 'no man has a right to the love or eſteem of a woman on whom he has entertained diſhonourable deſigns, and, failing in them, propoſes marriage at laſt. The lover, who marries his miſtreſs only becauſe he cannot gain her upon eaſier terms, has juſt as much generoſity as a highwayman who leaves a traveller in poſſeſſion of his money, becauſe he is not able to take it from him.'

'Well, well, my dear Miſs,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, ſmiling, 'I can collect this at leaſt from the nice diſtinctions you make, that your heart is abſolutely free; you would not reaſon ſo well, were there any ſecret paſſion in the caſe.'

'Surely,' replied Henrietta, 'you do not imagine that I ſhould become leſs delicate in my notions for being in love: that paſſion, like ſome plants, derives its qualities from the ſoil it grows in; for inſtance, in lord B——, it is mean, ſelfiſh, wavering.'

'And what would it be in you?' interrupted Mrs. Willis.

'Ah! no matter,' cried Henrietta; 'I am not in love yet, and never will be with a man who has ſuch ſentiments as lord B——; he had beſt be conſtant to Miſs Cordwain. Plebeian lords and the nobility of the ſhop and warehouſe are equal matches.'

To this remark Mrs. Willis, who was pleaſed with the vivacity of her fair friend, aſſented only with a ſmile: for ſupper was now placed upon the table; and as ſhe knew Henrietta had not dined, ſhe was extremely ſolicitous to make her eat, and with the ſame maternal fond-

ness hurried her soon to bed, that she might recover the fatigue she had suffered during the day.

The next morning at eleven o'clock, our fair heroine set out in an hackney-coach for ——— square, where lady D—— lived, to whom she was to deliver the recommendatory letter which the countess had given her.

The lady was at her toilet when she read her sister's letter, which Henrietta had sent in to her, and immediately ordered her admittance. Surprised at the elegant figure which met her eyes in the glass upon our fair heroine's entering the room, she hastily turned her head, and gazed on Henrietta so intently, that she blushed; which lady D—— observing, obligingly desired her to sit down, and said, she would talk to her presently.

Henrietta modestly placed herself at a distance, but so luckily for the lady's curiosity, that she could have a full view of her in her glass, without renewing her confusion.

'My sister,' said lady D——, breaking silence at last, 'has mentioned you very advantageously, Mrs. Benson, I wish it may be in my power to serve you.'

Henrietta bowed respectfully.

'You are very young,' pursued the lady; 'I suppose Miss Cordwain's was the first service you ever lived in?'

At the word *service* Henrietta blushed again; and indeed the lady did not pronounce it without some hesitation, for having a sensible and ingenuous mind, she felt the impropriety of the term when used towards a person, who, notwithstanding the humility of her deportment, had a dignity in her looks and air, which commanded respect. She took notice of this emotion, and the more because she saw it endeavoured to be suppressed; and being desirous of gaining some further knowledge of her, she asked her a hundred little questions, which she thought would lead her to an explanation of her circumstances.

Henrietta avoided making a discovery of herself, but answered in such a manner, as, without satisfying the

lady's curiosity, gave her a very good opinion of her candor and her sense: but she was particularly struck with the graceful ease with which she talked; and observed such a perfect politeness in her manners, as persuaded her she was born in a much higher rank than her present situation allowed the probability of.

Lady D——'s daughter now entered the room, and asked her mamma, if she desired to hear her take a lesson from her singing-master that morning?

The lady ordered the master to be admitted, upon which Henrietta rose up to go away; but the lady told her, with a benevolent smile, that she should stay and hear Miss D—— perform, and desired her to resume her seat.

While the young lady was singing, lady D—— kept her eyes fixed on Henrietta's face and from the sweet expression in it, collecting that she had a taste for musick, asked her, if she had ever been taught?

Henrietta, though not willing to make a display of talents which were not necessary to her present condition, yet owned, that she had a little knowledge of musick.

Lady D—— immediately desired to hear her sing, and the young lady at the same time presenting her guitar to her, she was obliged to comply. Her air, her attitude, the exquisite grace with which she touched the little instrument, the sweetness of her voice, and the sensibility in her fine eyes, charmed lady D——, who was an enthusiastic admirer of the art, so that she cried out in a kind of transport, 'Mr. Minime, would you not be proud of such a scholar?'

'Madam' said the master, bowing, 'the young gentlewoman has a very pretty voice and manner, to be sure: but if Miss D—— applies closely to music for seven or eight years longer, and does not suffer her mind to be distracted with the study of other sciences, I shall have more reason to be proud of my scholar than any master in the world.'

This speech forced a smile from Henrietta, who the

third time roſe up to be gone, upon hearing a female viſitor announced; but lady D——, conceiving that ſhe was not obliged to a ſtrict obſervation of ceremony with the perſon that was now entering, again inſiſted upon Henrietta's ſtaying, telling her, ſhe had thought of ſomething for her; and that ſhe would acquaint her with it as ſoon as the lady was gone.

Henrietta had but juſt time to expreſs a grateful acknowledgment of her kindneſs, when the viſitor was introduced. She was a woman of a mean aſpect, but had a great deal of ſelf-ſufficiency in her air. After the uſual compliments were over, ſhe threw herſelf into an eaſy chair, and examined Henrietta with ſuch extreme attention, that ſhe bluſhed.

The lady, who took conſequence to herſelf from the power of throwing an ingenuous mind into confuſion, finding that Henrietta was oppreſſed by her looks, gazed at her the more earneſtly: and having indulged herſelf ſeveral minutes in this exertion of her ſuperiority, thought it was now time to make the poor baſhful girl ſtare in her turn, and began to diſplay her wit and learning; the former in an inundation of words that ſwallowed up her meaning, and the latter in French words and phraſes, brought in to ſupply the deficiencies of her own native tongue.

Lady D——, who was uſed to divert herſelf with the ſingularity of this woman's character, liſtened to her with complaiſance. But Henrietta, who began to conceive a very mean opinion of a lady who ſeemed to value herſelf ſo highly upon the knowledge of a language, which was now become a part of every cobler's daughter's education, beheld her with an indifference that ſenſibly wounded her pride, and made her have recourſe to other methods to impreſs her prodigious conſequence upon her; and ſince ſhe could not make her ſtare at her learning, ſhe was reſolved to make her wonder at her principles.

'You know, lady D—— (ſaid ſhe abruptly) I do not often go to church.'

'I know it, and I am ſorry for it,' replied her ladyſhip.

'Upon my word, ſaid ſhe, I have too much reverence for the Deity to go to a place where it is ten to one but I ſhall hear him blaſphemed.'

Henrietta now began to ſtare indeed. The wonderful lady proceeded,

'I never pretend to deny that I am a deiſt.'

'You muſt pardon me, Mrs. ———,' interrupted lady D———, 'if I tell you that I really think you often declare that very improperly; I have heard you ſay ſo before your children and ſervants.'

'Madam,' replied Mrs. ———, 'I take care that my ſervants ſhall not think me an atheiſt. They know my principles better: they know I am a deiſt; they have heard me declare that I believe there is an intelligent cauſe which governs the world by phyſical rules. As for moral attributes, there is no ſuch thing; it is impious and abſurd to ſuppoſe it. The arbitrary conſtitution of things in the human ſyſtem produces happineſs and miſery; that is to ſay, miſery and happineſs is productive of—Or rather, as I ſaid before, the arbitrary conſtitution of things, vice and virtue, is neceſſarily produced by— that is, neceſſarily brings on happineſs or miſery.—Prayer, and ſuch like artifices of religion, is fooliſh: for whatever is, is right. To talk of imitating God, is blaſphemy. His Providence is extended to collective bodies only; he has no regard to individuals: nor is the ſoul a diſtinct ſubſtance from the body: There is no future ſtate; it is all a fiction. To argue from unequal diſtributions is abſurd and blaſphemous. Whatever is, is beſt. The law of nature is ſufficiently clear; and there is no need of any ſupernatural revelation.'

'I muſt intreat you, Madam,' interrupted lady D———, ſeeing her eldeſt daughter that moment enter the room, 'to change the diſcourſe now, Miſs has not been uſed to ſuch deep reaſoning on theſe awful ſubjects, and may perhaps miſtake what you are ſaying for blaſphemy.'

'More abſurd miſtakes than that may be made, Ma-

dam,' replied Mrs. ——, 'when persons are not allowed to exercise their mental faculties—but your ladyship is going to dress—I interrupt you.' Saying this, she rose up, and lady D—— making no efforts to detain her, took her leave.

'I have always hated that woman,' said Miss D——, as soon as she was gone, 'ever since I heard her ridicule parental affection, and call it brutal instinct.'

'Oh,' said lady D——, laughing, 'it would ill become one of her elevated understanding, to have natural affections: those she treats as vulgar prejudices. Her own sex are the objects of her scorn, because they are subject to such weaknesses as tenderness and pity. She reads Seneca on friendship in the morning; and exclaims, O the exalted passion! how divinely he treats it! what noble sentiments! In the afternoon she over-reaches her friend, and applauds her own wisdom. Epictetus is studied with great care. She will preach a moral sermon out of Epictetus that will last two hours. Epictetus teaches her to regulate her passions. She reads him intently while her maid is combing her hair, and closes her book to storm at the poor trembling creature for accidentally hurting her with the comb.'

CHAP. II.

In which Henrietta makes a very fantastic Distinction.

HENRIETTA could not help smiling at lady D——'s satirical manner of exposing the follies of the lady who had just left the room: but a female freethinker was, in her own opinion, so shocking a character, that she would much rather have seen it the object of abhorrence than mirth.

Lady D—— put an end to her reflections: for, turning towards her, 'Mrs. Benson (said she) it is time to think of you now.' Henrietta immediately rose from her seat.

'There is a lady of my acquaintance,' pursued lady D——, 'to whom your accomplishments of singing and playing will make you a very acceptable companion: and indeed I think it is a pity a young woman of your appearance and genteel education should remain in the

condition of a ſervant, which I am perſuaded you was not born to.'

Henrietta bluſhed; which lady D—— obſerving, 'come,' ſaid ſhe, ſmiling, 'be ingenuous, and confeſs that the propoſal I have made you will ſuit you better than being a ſervant.'

'Indeed, Madam, it does not,' replied Henrietta; 'I am extremely obliged to your ladyſhip for your kind intentions, but I had rather be recommended to the lady as a ſervant than in any other character.'

'You ſurpriſe me,' ſaid lady D——, after a little pauſe; 'what objection can you have to a ſituation ſo much to be preferred to ſervitude?'

'I am very ſure, Madam,' ſaid Henrietta, 'that I have not too much pride to be a ſervant, ſince it is neceſſary I ſhould be one: but I am afraid I cannot ſo eaſily ſubmit to be a dependent.'

Lady D——, a little diſappointed to find herſelf ſo far below this obſcure young perſon in delicacy of ſentiment, anſwered gravely,

'Well, ſince it muſt be ſo, I will ſerve you in your own way; let me ſee you again a few days hence, by that time I may poſſibly have heard of ſomething for you.'

Henrietta again politely thanked her ladyſhip, and withdrew, leaving lady D—— and her daughter differently affected with her behaviour in this laſt inſtance: for young minds are apt to be ſtruck with uncommon ſentiments, and to admire ſuch as ſeem to poſſeſs them; while perſons advanced in years, either from experience of the world, or the natural depravity of the human heart, aſcribe every thing to affectation and deſign, that contradicts certain received maxims in life.

However, Henrietta's peculiarity made lady D—— extremely deſirous to know who ſhe was, and whether there was any thing extraordinary in her circumſtances. She wrote to the counteſs her ſiſter, expreſſing her curioſity: but that lady was reſolved to keep Henrietta's ſecret, as well in regard to the promiſe ſhe had given

her, as becauſe ſhe really thought an unſeaſonable diſcovery of her true name and family would be diſadvantageous to the plan ſhe had laid.

She therefore contented herſelf with telling her ſiſter, in her anſwer, that Mrs. Benſon was a very deſerving young woman, who had been well brought up, but, by misfortunes in her family, reduced to go to ſervice.

Lady D—— was ſatisfied with this account; and when Henrietta, in obedience to her commands, waited on her again, ſhe received her with great benevolence; told her, ſhe had recommended her to a lady of great fortune, whoſe place ſhe believed would be an advantageous one; and ordered her own woman to go with a meſſage to the lady, and introduce her.

Henrietta having a hackney-coach waiting, lady D——'s woman and her, after ſome ceremonies which our fair heroine would gladly have diſpenſed with, ſeated themſelves in it; and, as ſoon as it drove from the door, the Abigail began,

'Well, Madam, you are certainly very fortunate, Mrs. Autumn's place is one of the beſt in Chriſtendom: you have nothing to do but to flatter her, and you will gain her heart for ever.'

'Is the lady fond of flattery then?' ſaid Henrietta.

'Oh! immenſely,' cried the other; 'but for fear you ſhould miſtake, and compliment her in the wrong place, you muſt know (and I think it is very lucky that I had an opportunity of inſtructing you) you muſt know that though ſhe is between forty and fifty years of age, ſhe affects to be thought extremely young; and having been handſome in her youth, as my lady ſays, ſhe forgets ſhe is no longer ſo now ſhe is old.

'Now, dear Madam, this is your cue. Be ſure to praiſe her bloomy complexion, and the brightneſs of her eyes; and, if ſhe bids you gueſs how old ſhe is, as 'tis ten to one but ſhe will ſome time hence, don't exceed twenty years, I charge you.

'The poor ſimple girl that lived with her laſt, loſt her place, by ſaying, when ſhe aſked her how old ſhe believed her to be, that ſhe took her ladyſhip to be about

the ſame age as her mother. She was a vulgar creature, to be ſure. You, Madam, are in no danger of ſpeaking ſo improperly. But on certain occaſions you may contradict her rudely, and ſhe will be the more pleaſed; as for inſtance, when ſhe ſays ſhe looks horridly! tell her in a ſurly way, as if you were vexed at her perverſeneſs, that you never ſaw her look ſo handſome.'

'Mighty well,' ſaid Henrietta, ſmiling, 'I perceive you are excellent in this art; I am——'

'Oh! no thanks, dear Madam,' interrupted lady D——'s woman, 'I am fond of doing good offices.'

'I was going to ſay,' replied Henrietta, 'that I am afraid theſe wiſe documents will be thrown away upon me.'

'I hope not,' ſaid the other, gravely. 'Come, take courage, you are but a young beginner; theſe things come of courſe. I ſhould be ſorry you were not capable of taking good counſel.'

They were now arrived at Mrs. Autumn's houſe: lady D——'s woman ſent up word, that ſhe was come with the perſon her lady had recommended to her ladyſhip; upon which both were ordered to go up ſtairs.

They found the lady giving audience to a milliner, a mantua-maker, and a mercer. Several pieces of ſilk lay unrolled before her, and a vaſt variety of ribbons, lappets, egrets, and other faſhionable trifles, were ſpread upon a table, on which ſhe leaned, in a thoughtful poſture, as unable to determine her choice.

When Henrietta and her companion entered, ſhe raiſed her eyes, and nodding familiarly at lady D——'s woman, who approached her, courtſying; 'you find me exceſſively buſy, Mrs. Echo (ſaid ſhe); well, what has lady D—— ſent me—Oh! a good likely body,' purſued ſhe, looking at Henrietta; 'my compliments Mrs. Echo, and thanks—You ſee I have hardly time to ſpeak to you—The young woman may ſtay, I'll talk to her preſently.'

Mrs. Echo withdrew; and the lady reſuming her contemplative poſture, gave Henrietta an opportunity of conſidering her at leiſure.

If lady D—'s woman had not fixed her age at somewhat more than forty, she would have concluded her to have been older, by the deep furrows in her face, her fallen cheeks, and the poor shrivell'd hand that supported her head: but her dress spoke her scarce fifteen; a French fillet supplied the place of a cap, and served to bind the few straggling hairs that graced her temples, to a tête, which was so loaded with hair, that her head seemed to be of an enormous size. The rest of her dress was suited exactly to the childish ornaments of her head; and though no object could be more ridiculous, yet Henrietta beheld her with a serious concern; for, true benevolence compassionates those follies which unfeeling hearts sacrifice to mirth.

Mr. Autumn at length rose up; 'that must be the thing,' said she, pointing to a pink and silver. She then gave some directions to her milliner; and, suddenly interrupting herself, turned with a lively air to the mercer, and asked him, why he had not cut off the silk?

'Your ladyship did not tell me how much you wanted,' replied the tradesman.

'Lord! I am the giddiest creature,' exclaimed Mrs. Autumn. This matter however was soon settled, and the important business with the milliner dispatched, she dismissed her trades-people, and, throwing herself with an affected air upon a settee, ordered Henrietta to come forward.

'I was afraid, said she, that lady D——, who is very fond of seeing grave solemn faces about her, had sent me some antiquated creature that would have frightened me; but you seem to be a sprightly young body: we shall agree very well, I hope.'

Henrietta courtesied.

'I hate old people,' pursued the lady; 'they are generally obstinate and surly. God help us, we shall all be old if we live—but when one is in years one's self, it is time enough to be plagued with the humours of those that are; you will suit me extremely well.'

Henrietta courtesied again.

'You are no talker, I find,' said Mrs. Autumn, a

little chagrined that the hints ſhe had thrown out, had produced nothing which could flatter her extreme deſire of being thought young. 'Well, there is no great harm in that; I ſhall take you upon lady D——'s recommendation. As for terms——'.

'Madam,' ſaid Henrietta, who now for the firſt time opened her mouth; 'they ſhall be whatever you think proper.'

'Very well,' ſaid the lady, 'we will talk no more about them then; if you can find out how to pleaſe me, which will be no difficult matter I aſſure you, my place may prove a very advantageous one, and the ſooner you come the better.'

Henrietta told her, ſhe was ready to come whenever ſhe pleaſed. Upon which, Mrs. Autumn, with the pretty impatience of youth, aſked her, if it would be any inconvenience to her to come that very night?

Henrietta, who was naturally obliging, aſſured her it would not; and was diſmiſſed with a gracious ſmile for her ready compliance.

Mrs. Willis, who had flattered herſelf that ſhe ſhould enjoy the company of her amiable friend for a few weeks at leaſt, was greatly diſappointed when ſhe found ſhe was to loſe her ſo ſoon; and gently blamed her for being ſo precipitate.

Henrietta gave her the character of the lady ſhe was going to live with, and repeated what ſhe had ſaid to her. 'You may be ſure, added ſhe, that I ſhall never pleaſe Mrs. Autumn in the way ſhe expects to be pleaſed. Flattery is always mean; but to flatter folly, is, in my opinion, criminal. However, I gladly embraced the firſt opportunity that offered to ſhew my willingneſs to oblige, though I would not flatter her. You will hardly believe me, perhaps, ſaid ſhe, ſmiling, when I tell you, that one of the greateſt bars to my happineſs in my preſent humble ſituation is, the difficulty of pleaſing without wounding my own delicacy and candor. It is not eaſy to live well with our ſuperiors, and preſerve our integrity; but it is not impoſſible; and, if I

fail in that attempt, I ſhall at leaſt have this ſatisfaction, that I ſuffer in the cauſe of virtue.'

'It requires all that ſweetneſs of temper which you poſſeſs,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, 'to live with a woman of Mrs. Autumn's fantaſtic turn, without being diſguſted with it. What an abſurdity! at fifty years to expect to be thought young; and to imagine that, by affecting the follies of youth, we ſhall have the bloom of it alſo. Our ſex have been reproached with never cultivating our minds till we can no longer pleaſe by our perſons; but here is a woman who has not judgment enough to know when ſhe ought to reſign the hope of pleaſing by her perſon. Take my word for it, you will be very unhappy with her, unleſs you reſolve to accommodate yourſelf to her humour, and ſooth her in her ridiculous folly.'

'That I will not do,' replied Henrietta; 'and ſince I have learned not to fear poverty, my happineſs will never depend upon others.'

Mrs. Willis, finding ſhe could not prevail with her fair friend to alter her reſolution, acquieſced in it at length; and Henrietta, taking an affectionate leave of her, repaired to her new habitation.

CHAP. III.

Which ſhews Henrietta in her new Service, where ſhe acquits herſelf extremely ill.

THE lady being engaged with company when Henrietta arrived, ſhe did not ſee her till late at night, when ſhe was ſummoned to undreſs her.

'Come hither, Henrietta,' ſaid ſhe, as ſoon as ſhe entered the room; 'I have ſeen lady D—— ſince you was here.—She has given me ſuch an advantageous account of your underſtanding, that I am reſolved to make you my confidant.'

At the word Confidant Henrietta looked a little confuſed; but the lady, who did not obſerve her emotion, reclined her head upon her hand, and, fixing her eyes upon her glaſs, to ſee how this penſive attitude became her.

'I am certainly (purſued ſhe, ſighing) the moſt un-

fortunate woman in the world,—Benſon, if you would be happy, never marry.'

'I have no thought of marriage at preſent, Madam,' ſaid Henrietta.

'Ah, how I envy your freedom,' ſaid the antiquated fair; you are plagued with no unreaſonable jealouſy. Benſon, you will not be here long before you are a witneſs to my perſecutions. I wiſh I could conceal them, but that is impoſſible.'

'I am ſorry, Madam,' ſaid Henrietta, who was under a neceſſity of ſaying ſomething in anſwer to this ſtrange ſtuff, 'to hear that you have any thing to make you uneaſy.'

'It does not ſignify,' exclaimed the lady, with an emotion which ſhe herſelf took to be real; 'I ſhall be choaked if I don't ſpeak; may I depend upon your prudence, Benſon!—But I know I may. Well then, you muſt know there is a poor young fellow who pretends—But why do I ſay pretends—who is deſperately—what ſhall I call it—who has an unconquerable, invincible, hopeleſs, fatal, dying paſſion for—for me, in ſhort. Is not this a ſhocking thing?'

'Indeed! Madam,' replied Henrietta, with great truth, 'I pity you extremely.'

'Ay, am I not greatly to be pitied, child?' ſaid the lady. 'Then the poor wretch cannot conceal his folly; and it makes Mr. Autumn ſo uneaſy, that really his temper is intolerable.'

'Pardon me, Madam,' ſaid Henrietta; 'but I am not ſurpriſed that Mr. Autumn is uneaſy at ſuch folly as you juſtly call it.'

'Why, to be ſure it is folly,' ſaid Mrs. Autumn: 'but then, if one reflects a little—It is not folly neither—for love, you know, is an involuntary paſſion. So that—but you have a very unfeeling heart, Benſon; and yet, to judge by your looks, you ſhould have great ſenſibility. Pray, have you never felt the tender paſſion?'

'If you mean love, Madam,' replied Henrietta; 'indeed I cannot ſay I have.'

'Well, you will be a happy creature,' said the lady, sighing, 'if you can always maintain this indifference: but poor Languish must not expect to meet with much compassion from you. Poor wretch! (continued she, laughing) I cannot help triumphing a little. I have nick-named him Languish, from his eternal sighing, and the melancholy roll of his eyes. Mr. Autumn cannot endure to hear me call him by this name; but I love to plague him a little now and then: what signifies power, if one does not shew one has it. Yet he ought to be satisfied with me for what I did this evening, when Languish indiscreetly betrayed the violence of his passion, by eagerly running (though there were two gentlemen nearer) to take up my glove which I had dropped: I took no notice of the dying air with which he presented it to me; but, as if his touch had polluted it, I received it haughtily from him, and threw it aside. Sure this instance of disdain was enough to satisfy a jealous husband; yet mine, instead of looking pleased, coloured with jealousy and rage, and gave me such furious glances: however, this will always be the case, where there is so great a disproportion in age; Mr. Autumn is not less than forty. But hey day! is the girl asleep?' continued she looking at Henrietta, who stood fixed in thought; for the absurd affectation of her mistress gave her matter enough for reflection. 'Come, undress me; Mr. Autumn will wonder at my long stay, and as he is ingenious in tormenting himself, he will possibly suspect that I have been reading a letter from this rival of his; but there he over-rates his presumption, he has not ventured to write to me yet, his passion is only expressed in sighs and looks.'

Henrietta made haste to obey her, her patience being almost exhausted; for Mrs. Autumn had got on a subject which she knew not how to quit, and her women being the only persons to whom she could utter these extravagancies, without any danger of being mortified with sarcastic hints of age, and such envious and unjust reflections, she made herself amends with them, for the

reserve

reserve she was much against her will obliged to maintain with others.

Henrietta was at length ordered to wait on her to her chamber, and soon after retired to her own, greatly out of humour with her mistress, and not a little displeased at herself, to find that her philosophy, by which she was enabled to bear the change of her fortune with patience and resignation, could not guard her against fretfulness and disgust at the follies she was forced to be witness to.

Mrs. Autumn, like other modern ladies, lay in bed always till it was very late: this being one of those happy expedients for killing time (as the fashionable phrase is) which, to discover, employs the inventions of persons of rank and fortune. Henrietta had attended three whole hours in her lady's dressing-room, in expectation every moment of being summoned to assist her to rise, when Mr. Autumn at length entered the room.

His servant, while he was dressing him, had told him, that his lady's new woman, whom he had a glympse of as he passed by her on the stairs, was the greatest beauty he ever beheld; so that being curious to see her, he came to breakfast with his wife that morning.

Henrietta rose up at his entrance; Mr. Autumn bowed, looked at her attentively, and thought his man had taste. But he was still more struck with her noble air than the charms of her face, and felt an uneasy emotion when he saw her continue standing, with that humble respect, which, although it became her situation, seemed little suited to the dignity of her appearance. 'Is not Mrs. Autumn up, Madam?' said he, not being able to forbear using that respectful style. Henrietta, supposing he did not know her rank in his family, replied,

'I expect my lady will ring every moment, Sir.'

'Pray let her know that I am come to breakfast with her,' said Mr. Autumn.

Henrietta went immediately into her lady's chamber, and, finding her awake, delivered her message.

'Lord bless me!' said Mrs. Autumn, 'what new

whim is this? He does not use to invade my apartment in a morning: I suppose he is come to teaze me with some of his jealous fancies. Well, since it must be so, order breakfast to be sent in, and come to me directly.'

What a ridiculous woman is this, thought Henrietta, as she went out of the room, to torment herself at her age with the notion of her husband being jealous of her.

The good lady, when she returned, charged her not to leave the room while they were at breakfast. 'Your presence, said she, may perhaps be some restraint upon him.'

She then slipt on a night gown, and went in a frightful dishabille to attend her complaisant spouse; for she was one of those ladies who dress for every body but their husbands.

Henrietta was not sorry that she was directed to wait, for she was extremely desirous of knowing whether her lady had any reason for the uneasiness she expressed. Mr. Autumn's good humour and complaisance soon put that matter out of doubt; but Mrs. Autumn was resolved to persuade her maid that her husband was jealous, and laughing affectedly, cried,

'Well, don't be chagrined, Mr. Autumn, but I protest I dreamt of poor Languish last night.'

The husband shook his head, winked at his wife, and pointed to Henrietta, as if he had said, don't expose yourself before your new servant.

'Why, how you frown now!' pursued Mrs. Autumn; 'I knew you would be angry. Lord! what does it signify of whom one dreams: one does not always think of the persons one dreams of. I wish I had not told you.'

'I wish you had not,' said Mr. Autumn, biting his lip with vexation at her folly. The lady then lowering her voice, as if she was not willing to be heard by Henrietta, though she took care not to make it impossible, repeated,

'Trifles light as air,
'Are to the jealous, confirmations strong
'As proofs of holy writ.'

'You are well read in Shakefpear, Madam,' faid Mr. Autumn, who was willing to give another turn to the difcourfe.

'Oh!' exclaimed fhe, 'he has touched the paffion of jealoufy finely in his character of Othello; I think the Moor was uneafy about a dream too.'

Juft then fomebody tapped at the door, Henrietta opened it; one of the footmen delivered a meffage from one lady, enquiring how Mrs. Autumn did, and a fealed-up card from another.

While the fervant was fpeaking, Mrs. Autumn called out, what makes the fellow whifper in that manner, as if the meffage he brings was a fecret? Henrietta delivered her the card, which fhe threw upon the table without opening it. 'I am refolved (faid fhe) to turn that blockhead away; his myfterious manner is enough to put ftrange fancies into people's heads.'

'The ftrange fancies are all your own,' faid Mr. Autumn, peevifhly.

'I thought it would be fo,' cried the lady, 'you are out of humour. What is this fealed up card the grievance? come, we will open it, and you fhall know the contents.'

'Indeed I will not,' faid Mr. Autumn rifing; I have not the leaft curiofity about the contents—Good morning to you, my dear, I am going out.'

'Well, Benfon,' faid Mrs. Autumn, as foon as her hufband had left the room; 'is not this a comfortable life I live? what a paffion that poor man is in!'

'Was Mr. Autumn angry, Madam?' faid Henrietta.

'To be fure he was,' faid the lady; 'did you not obferve it?'

'Indeed, Madam' replied Henrietta, 'Mr. Autumn did not feem to me to be angry.'

'No, really!' faid Mrs. Autumn; 'you have a great deal of penetration, it muft be confeffed.—You think you are very difcreet now, but you are miftaken. However, I charge you, don't goffip among youi com-

panions about Mr. Autumn's unhappy jealoufy; I don't want the world to know what I fuffer upon that account.'

'I never will mention it, Madam, to any body,' replied Henrietta.

'Nay, for that matter,' faid Mrs. Autumn, 'you might mention it without any bad intention, by way of pitying me, or fo; and perhaps I fhould not think the worfe of you. But if you can be filent, Benfon, you will oblige me; reports of this kind, you know, fhould not be circulated.'

'They never fhall by me, Madam,' faid Henrietta.

'Enough, enough,' cried Mrs. Autumn, haftily; 'I hate long fpeeches.'

Henrietta was pleafed with a declaration which enjoined her filence; for if it be tirefome to liften to the fallies of affectation and impertinence, it is much more fo to be obliged to anfwer them.

CHAP. IV.

Gives the Reader hopes of a favourable Change in the Circumftances of our fair Heroine.

HENRIETTA had exercifed her patience for fome weeks in the fervice of Mrs. Autumn: but every day producing new inftances of her folly, fhe refolved to quit her as foon as the countefs came to town. She conceived fhe was in fome degree accountable to that lady for her actions, fince it was through her recommendation, that fhe had been introduced to Mrs. Autumn; and fhe thought it neceffary for the juftification of her conduct, to have fo confiderable a witnefs of its being irreproachable.

Her lady, though fhe found herfelf always difappointed in that complaifance to her whims which fhe endeavoured to exact from her, yet ventured to make her a propofal, which her own want of delicacy hindered her from feeing the impropriety of.

She had taken it into her head to try her fuppofed lover's conftancy, and therefore wrote a letter to him, in the character of a lady unknown, on whofe heart he had made a deep impreffion, but who was refolved not to

discover herself till she knew whether his was wholly disengaged.

This letter, she doubted not, would produce a declaration that would afford matter of great triumph to herself, who she suspected was the secret object of his adoration.

She acquainted her woman with her scheme, and gravely desired her to copy the letter, for Languish, she said, knew her hand.

Henrietta blushed with surprise and shame at this improper request, and very frankly begged to be excused from complying with it.

'What!' said Mrs. Autumn, a little confused; 'you dispute my commands then!'

'I never refused to obey any of your commands before, Madam,' replied Henrietta; 'but this, pardon me, appears so strange.'

'You do not dare to suspect my virtue, I hope,' said Mrs. Autumn, in a lofty accent.

'It does not become me, Madam,' said Henrietta, 'to censure your actions.'

'No, certainly,' replied the lady, 'nor to refuse to do any thing that I order you to do: but I would fain know if you, in your great wisdom, think there is any thing improper in this little piece of gallantry.'

'My opinion is of no consequence, Madam,' replied Henrietta; 'I only beg to be excused from copying it.'

'Well, no more of the letter,' cried Mrs. Autumn hastily: 'perhaps I had only a mind to try your discretion; perhaps too I shall like you the better for your steadiness—Be modest and reserved, and you will be sure of my approbation. Were you the best servant in the world, you would not do for me, unless you were extremely modest. And now you know my mind, be cautious how you behave: modesty is a sure recommendation to my favour; I can pardon any fault in my servant but want of modesty.'

Henrietta, from this declaration, had reason to think herself pretty sure of her lady's favour: for the severest

prude that ever declaimed againſt the monſtrous levity of her own ſex, could not have objected to the propriety of her behaviour; but, unhappily for her, ſhe was that very day guilty of a fault by which ſhe incurred very ſhocking ſuſpicions: for, having neglected to fill her lady's ſmelling-bottle with ſome freſh Eau de Luce, Mrs. Autumn declared that ſuch heedleſſneſs muſt neceſſarily proceed from her having her thoughts continually employed upon fellows; and telling her, that ſhe could not endure ſuch a creature in her ſight, ordered her to be gone immediately.

Henrietta did not think proper to offer any anſwer to this ſtrange charge; but quitting her preſence immediately, and her houſe a few moments afterwards, ſhe returned to Mrs. Willis, who, ſeeing her alight at her door, eagerly flew to receive her.

'I have great news for you, my dear Miſs,' ſaid ſhe, 'I was this moment preparing to ſet out in a coach to bring you a letter, which was left here by one of your uncle's ſervants. 'It is very true,' purſued ſhe, ſeeing Henrietta looked ſurpriſed. 'I aſked the young man, who he came from? and he ſaid, the earl of ——. You may believe I am impatient to know the contents of this letter. Come, my dear, and read it; I hope all your troubles are over now.'

Henrietta receiving the letter from her, which ſhe took out of her pocket, followed her into the parlour, and, breaking the ſeal,

'It is my uncle's hand, indeed,' ſaid ſhe, 'and this is what he writes.'

'Miſs Courteney is deſired to call at the earl of——, to-morrow morning at twelve o'clock, he has ſomething to propoſe to her for her advantage.'

'Did I not tell you, Miſs,' ſaid Mrs. Willis, exultingly, 'that the ſtep you had taken would produce a favourable change in your fortune?'

'Don't be too ſanguine in your expectations, my dear Mrs. Willis,' ſaid Miſs Courteney; 'who knows but my uncle may have another Sir Iſaac Darby to propoſe to me; however, I will certainly wait upon him, and

if poſſible, will be punctual to the hour he has preſcribed me; but if nothing ſhould come of this overture of his lordſhip's, I ſhall be your gueſt again for ſome time. I have left Mrs. Autumn.'

She then related to her ſome circumſtances of that lady's extravagant folly, and the cauſe and manner of their parting, which, together with their comments on lord ——'s meſſage, furniſhed them with matter ſufficient for diſcourſe during the remainder of that day: what happened to our fair heroine the next, will be found in the following chapter.

CHAP. V.

Deſtroys the Expectations raiſed by the foregoing Chapter.

HENRIETTA was at her uncle's houſe exactly at the hour preſcribed her; and, upon ſending in her name, was deſired to walk into his lordſhip's library.

The earl was there to receive her: he had with him two of his daughters; but theſe young ladies withdrew immediately, after ſaluting her in a very diſtant manner, which ſhe returned with equal reſerve and coldneſs.

'Miſs Courteney,' ſaid his lordſhip, as ſoon as they were alone, 'I have been extremely angry with you for leaving your aunt in the ſtrange manner you did.'

'I am extremely obliged to your lordſhip,' replied Henrietta, 'for taking ſo much intereſt in any thing that concerns me.'

'You certainly acted very indiſcreetly,' ſaid the earl; 'but what is paſt, cannot be helped. You have had the good luck to make yourſelf friends, notwithſtanding this wrong ſtep. You have been at the counteſs of ——'s ſeat, I hear.'

'Yes, my lord,' anſwered Henrietta; 'I was there with ——'

'The counteſs is very much your friend,' interrupted his lordſhip, haſtily, 'but her ſon is more ſo.'

Henrietta bluſhed, and was ſilent.

'I will not,' purſued his lordſhip, 'examine into your motives for leaving lady Meadows; but I will, if poſſible, accommodate matters between you, provided

you will concur with me in my endeavours for that purpose.'

'I desire nothing more earnestly than to be reconciled to my aunt,' replied Henrietta.

'I believe it will be your own fault if you are not,' resumed his lordship; 'and if you recover her favour, your good fortune will not stop there—To keep you no longer in suspence then, lord B—— has declared a passion for you, and has solicited my interest towards effecting a reconciliation between your aunt and you, that he may pay his addresses to you in a proper manner.'

'I am surprised that lord B—— should make such a proposal,' said Henrietta, 'he is engaged to the daughter of a rich citizen.'

'No, not engaged,' replied the earl; 'the match has been proposed, and he has visited the young woman.'

'Indeed, my lord,' replied Henrietta, 'the affair is much further advanced.'

'Well, well,' interrupted his lordship, 'we will suppose that the writings are drawn and every thing settled; but they are not married, nor engaged neither.'

'His inclinations, you find, have taken another turn: you have no reason to blame him for this, I am sure; and it would be strange indeed if a man of his rank and fortune was to mind the censures of the vulgar.'

Henrietta was silent. His lordship proceeded,

'Lord B—— will find it difficult, no doubt, to prevail upon the earl to break off his treaty, and consent to his marrying you, though lady Meadows should offer to make you her heir: because in that case your fortune would be greatly below that of this citizen, whom he has chose for him. Nevertheless, he does not despair of effecting this, provided your aunt will do for you what it was expected she would before you was so unhappy as to disoblige her. In this lord B—— sufficiently shews the sincerity and ardor of his passion, it is your part now to convince him that you are not ungrateful.'

'What would your lordſhip have me to do?' ſaid Henrietta.

'I would have you ſubmit to your aunt,' ſaid the earl, 'and regain her affection, if poſſible. Lord B—— has reaſon to expect this compliance from you.'

'I will do every thing I ought to do,' replied Henrietta, 'to recover my aunt's favour, and this without any view to lord B—'s offers.'

'Well, we ſhall not examine too nicely into that matter,' interrupted his lordſhip, ſmiling. 'All that remains to be done, is this; I will ſee lady Meadows myſelf, ſhe will be in town ſoon, I ſuppoſe; lord B——'s propoſal, which I will acquaint her with, will captivate her attention, and be your beſt juſtification. As for what little conceſſions ſhe may expect from you, I ſhall leave them to be ſettled by yourſelves.'

'There are certain conceſſions, however,' ſaid Henrietta, 'which it is impoſſible for me to make, and which, if my aunt inſiſts upon as the neceſſary conditions of a reconciliation between us, I muſt ſtill continue under her diſpleaſure, and hazard all the conſequences of it.'

'I am afraid you are going to ſay ſome ſilly thing or other,' interrupted his lordſhip, riſing from his ſeat; which motion Henrietta underſtanding as a hint for her to haſten her departure, roſe alſo.

'I will detain your lordſhip no longer,' ſaid ſhe, 'than juſt to tell you that ſome time ago my aunt propoſed to me to ſettle all her fortune upon me, provided I would embrace the Roman catholic religion.'

'A noble offer, upon my honour!' ſaid his lordſhip, 'and did you refuſe it?'

'Would your lordſhip have had me accept of it?' ſaid Henrietta.

'What ſignifies what I would have had you do,' replied the earl, peeviſhly. 'What did the conſideration of your own intereſt ſuggeſt to you?'

'To refuſe it, my lord,' anſwered Henrietta, 'and I did ſo.'

'I find you are a very romantic girl,' ſaid his lord-

ship; 'I am resolved to trouble myself no more about your affairs.'

'I hope it will not be imputed to me as a crime,' said Henrietta, 'that I could not be bribed to change my religion.'

'Change your religion!' repeated the earl, 'what necessity was there for your changing your religion: you might have humoured the old woman, have gone with her to mass, and conformed to some of her superstitious ceremonies, and be a good protestant in your heart notwithstanding; the world, knowing your motives, would have commended you for such a prudent conduct—I see there is nothing to be done with you,' pursued he, after a little pause. 'For the sake of the unfortunate man, who was your father, I would have been glad to have seen you well married; but lord B—— is not such a fool as to take you without a fortune; and as you cannot reasonably have any expectations but from lady Meadows, who has no children, and may leave her fortune to whom she pleases, without doing any body injustice, you know best whether it is worth your while to make a proper submission to her or not.'

'I will never make an improper one,' said Henrietta.

'To be sure,' said his lordship, 'your own wisdom is to be judge of that.'

'No, my lord,' replied Henrietta; 'you shall if you please be judge—if my conscience—'

'Pray, let me hear nothing about your conscience,' interrupted the earl; 'it is not my business to set matters even between you and your conscience; your aunt's popish confessor, who is likely to be her heir, is skilful in those things; yet I would not advise you to consult him neither, for he is an interested person: but remember, that you may either secure to yourself a good estate, and marry a very deserving young nobleman, or continue in the obscurity and want your father left you in, which is all the legacy he bequeathed you. Think well of this, and then let your conscience determine. I do not advise you to do any thing against it.'

'My resolution is already fixed,' said Henrietta; 'my

conscience will neither permit me to change my religion, nor to counterfeit a change of it.'

'Do you insinuate by that,' said his lordship, hastily, 'that I advised you to do either the one or the other?'

'My aunt already knows my mind,' said Henrietta, evading a question which she could not answer truly without offending him: 'I have nothing to hope for from your lordship's interposition, unless she has been pleased to give up this point; and I shall chearfully return to that poverty my father bequeathed me, since with it he bequeathed me piety and virtue.'

'It is a pity he did not leave you prudence also,' said the earl, who found something very provoking in this last speech, 'you would not then have disobliged your aunt by your scandalous elopement from her, which has reduced you to the miserable condition you are now in, so that your friends know not how to take notice of you.'

'Friends! my lord,' replied Henrietta, rising in her temper; 'I have no friends, I have only relations.'

'That is likely to be their misfortune,' said his lordship, who was very angry at this sarcasm: 'your undutifulness to your aunt makes you unworthy of the notice of your relations; and I declare to you plainly, that from this moment I will never concern myself about you.'

Henrietta disdained to make any answer to this unjust and cruel speech; but courtesied in silence, and withdrew; leaving the earl very well satisfied with himself for the tender and parental part he had acted towards his brother's daughter, and furnished with excellent reasons for never seeing her more.

'I had provided a match for her,' said he, that very evening, to an humble friend, who he knew would not fail to spread the report, 'not unworthy of a daughter of my own. She rejected my proposal. She refused to make any submission to her aunt, whom I would have prevailed upon to be reconciled to her. Let her suffer the consequences of her obstinacy and folly; I have

done all that I ought to do, and am juſtified to the world.'

His lordſhip forgot to add, that the ſubmiſſion which was expected from her was nothing more than the change of her religion, and the match ſhe ſo obſtinately refuſed, could not be effected without ſhe purchaſed a fortune by an impious hypocriſy. Nevertheleſs, the omiſſion of theſe trifling circumſtances gave ſuch a colour to Henrietta's behaviour, that ſhe was conſidered by all, who heard her uncle's account of it, as an unhappy young creature, who would ruin herſelf, and be the blot of a noble family.

As for our fair heroine, ſhe foreſaw that her uncle would juſtify his neglect of her at her expence. She had every thing againſt her; rank, fortune, power; that general prejudice which prevails againſt the unfortunate, and that as general ſervility which adopts the paſſions of the great. But theſe reflections filled her with no uneaſy apprehenſions; for there is this advantage in virtue, that it is ſufficient for itſelf, and needs not the applauſe or ſupport of others, its own conſciouſneſs being its beſt reward.

CHAP. VI.

In which Lord B—— ſhews himſelf a true modern Lover.

HENRIETTA, before ſhe went home, waited upon lady D——, to acquaint her that ſhe had left Mrs. Autumn. She avoided mentioning that lady's peculiarities which had made it impoſſible to pleaſe her; but with great ſimplicity related the error ſhe had been guilty of, and the ſuſpicions ſhe had incurred by it, which occaſioned her diſmiſſion.

Lady D—— diverted herſelf for ſome time with the extreme delicacy of her whimſical friend, and then told Henrietta, that having ſtill a good opinion of her prudence and modeſty, notwithſtanding the reaſons Mrs. Autumn had to ſuſpect her, ſhe would place her about a young lady, a relation of her own.

Henrietta thanked her in very reſpectful terms, and took her leave, after ſhe had, at lady D——'s deſire,

left her a direction to her lodgings, that she might know where to send for her when it was necessary.

At her return, she found the faithful Mrs. Willis full of anxious impatience to hear the success of her visit to the earl. Henrietta, through respect to her uncle, concealed the greatest part of his discourse to her, but owned that she had no expectations from him.

Mrs. Willis shrugged up her shoulders: 'Then it was as you suspected, said she, your uncle has proposed some absurd match to you, and you have forfeited his future favour by not complying with it.'

'You will be surprised to hear that lord B—— has made an application to my uncle,' said Henrietta.

'Surprised!' repeated Mrs. Willis; 'why, to be sure, considering how your affairs are circumstanced, this is a generous way of proceeding. Well, I hope you begin now to have a favourable opinion both of his love and honour.'

'I am sure I think highly of his prudence,' replied Henrietta, smiling: 'only mark the caution with which he acts in this affair; my poverty gave him hopes that I should be an easy conquest, and that passion which first manifested itself in an open attempt upon my honour, sought afterwards to allure me with bribes. It is not strange that persons, who hold money to be the greatest good, should think it more than an equivalent for virtue. Here, however, he was disappointed again, to his great astonishment, no doubt, and marriage is this honourable lover's last resource; but this he does not offer till he is sure I shall have a fortune, if not equal to that of my rival the packer's daughter, yet at least sufficient to justify his choice in the opinion of the prudential part of the world; and perhaps he expects I should purchase the mighty blessing of his hand by the sacrifice, the temporary sacrifice at least of those principles, for which I have already suffered so much.'

'Have you any reason for this shocking suspicion?' interrupted Mrs. Willis.

'I think I have,' replied Henrretta: 'a reconci-

liation with my aunt is, it ſeems, a neceſſary preliminary to his addreſſes: and yet he heard from myſelf upon what condition that reconciliation could only be effected.' Henrietta ſuddenly interrupting herſelf, cried out, 'There he is; there is lord B——.'

'Where? where?' ſaid Mrs. Willis, running to the window. 'It is certainly he,' ſaid Henrietta, 'he paſſed by in a chair.

That inſtant they heard a loud rap at the door.

'As I live,' cried Mrs. Willis (in a violent flutter) 'he is come to viſit you. I hope you will ſee him, Miſs Courteney; hear what he has to ſay, pray do; there can be no harm in that, I am ſure.'

'Well, well,' ſaid Henrietta, ſmiling at her ſolicitude; 'I will ſee him; let him be ſhewn into the other parlour, if you pleaſe.'

Mrs. Willis, curious to ſee this young lord, went herſelf to open the door. He bolted out of the chair; and, with a look and accent full of impatience, aſked her, if the young lady that lodged there was at home?'

'Miſs Courteney, Sir?' ſaid Mrs. Willis.

'Yes,' replied he, haſtily; 'is ſhe at home, can I ſee her? Pray tell her a gentleman from ——, enquires for her.'

Mrs. Willis deſired him to walk into the parlour, ſaid ſhe would acquaint the young lady with his being there; and a few moments afterwards Henrietta appeared.

Lord B—— flew to meet her, with the air of a lover conſcious of the right he had to be well received; and, taking her hand, which he reſpectfully kiſſed,

'Now,' cried he, exultingly, 'can you doubt the ardor of my paſſion for you? and will you not at length confeſs that it is poſſible for a man to deſerve you?'

'Certainly, my lord,' replied Henrietta, 'it is very poſſible.'

'May I periſh if I think ſo (ſaid he); but how poorly would words expreſs my adoration of you. Judge of the purity, the ardor of my love, by what I

have done to make you mine.—Have you feen your uncle, Mifs Courtney?'

'I have, my lord,' replied Henrietta.

'You have!' repeated his lordfhip; 'and in that grave cold accent too. Surely my fentiments and defigns are ftill unknown to you: it is impoffible elfe that you fhould be thus infenfible, nay ungrateful, I will fay—for I have given no common proofs of love, I think.'

'Indeed, my lord,' replied Henrietta, who had a mind to teaze this generous lover a little, 'you fhall not fuffer for your noble difintereftednefs—you fhall not relinquifh Mifs Cordwain and her immenfe fortune for me.'

'Name not her fortune,' cried lord B——; 'were it millions I would refufe it for you.'

'Nay, now your lordfhip is quite romantic,' faid Henrietta, 'to prefer to a rich heirefs an unhappy young woman, deferted by her relations, and reduced to feek a fubfiftence by her labour.'

'Call not my paffion romantic,' interrupted lord B——, 'becaufe it foars above common conceptions: a mind fo elevated as your's, might give it a jufter epithet.'

'Were my aunt,' purfued Henrietta, 'to leave me her whole eftate, you would ftill make no inconfiderable facrifice by quitting Mifs Cordwain for me, fince my fortune would then be greatly inferior to her's. But you know, my lord, I have no expectations from lady Meadows: I have declared to my uncle the hard conditions upon which fhe offers to make me her heir, conditions that I never will accept of; and therefore I may very well call your paffion romantic, when, under fuch circumftances, you could think of making an application to my uncle.'

'To be fure, Madam,' faid lord B——, whofe countenance expreffed at once furprife, confufion, and difappointment—'I did apply to the earl, not perfonally indeed. I contrived it fo that a friend of mine, who is very intimate with his lordfhip, fhould give him a hint

of your ſituation, and the ſentiments I entertained for you: and, from the account my friend gave me of his ſucceſs in his negotiation, I conceived that you might be prevailed upon—that is, that you would conſider— For might I not hope, my dear Miſs Courteney, that you would not be inſenſible of my affection.'

Here his lordſhip pauſed, and looked on Henrietta with a languiſhing air, ſeeming to wiſh and expect that her tenderneſs would ſpare him a further explanation; but our fair heroine, who did not chuſe to collect his meaning from the abrupt and inconnected ſentences he had uttered, continued maliciouſly ſilent, as if ſhe waited for the end of his diſcourſe.

'I ſee (reſumed he) that I have not been happy enough to inſpire you with any tender ſentiments for me. Pardon me, Miſs Courteney, but I muſt be ſo free as to tell you that if you were not prepoſſeſſed in favour of another perſon, the proofs I have given you of my affection would not be received with ſuch indifference.'

'There needs not ſuch prepoſſeſſion,' replied Henrietta, vexed at this hint, 'to make me receive with indifference the proofs you have hitherto given me of that affection your lordſhip boaſts of. Am I to reckon among theſe proofs, my lord, the inſult you offered me at Mrs. Eccles's, and the ſtrange declaration you made me in the country?'

'Ah, how cruel is this recapitulation now!' cried lord B——: 'do I not do juſtice to your birth, your beauty and virtue, by my preſent honourable intentions?'

'It is not enough for me, my lord,' ſaid Henrietta, 'that your intentions are honourable now; to have merited my eſteem, they ſhould always have been ſo: but, to ſpeak plainly, I am ſtill doubtful of your intentions.'

'Doubtful ſtill of my intentions!' repeated lord B——: 'have I not declared them to your uncle, Madam? have I not ſolicited his intereſt with you?'

'Suppoſe that obtained, my lord,' ſaid Henrietta, 'and that it has all the weight with me you could wiſh.'

'Why then we ſhall be happy, my angel,' cried he, taking her hand, and preſſing it to his lips. 'You will be reconciled to your aunt, and I may hope for my father's conſent to our union.'

'A renconciliation with my aunt is impoſſible,' ſaid Henrietta, withdrawing her hand.

'Say not that it is impoſſible,' replied lord B——, 'but that you have not complaiſance enough for me, to attempt it.'

'Did I not know it to be impoſſible,' reſumed Henrietta, 'I would attempt it for my own ſake; but nothing leſs than the ſacrifice of my religion will ſatisfy my aunt: on this condition indeed ſhe promiſes to ſettle her whole eſtate upon me; I think I once told your lordſhip ſo.'

'You did, my dear Miſs Courteney,' interrupted lord B——; 'and I adore you for your ſteady adherence to your principles.'

Henrietta was a little ſtartled at ſo unexpected a declaration; but lord B—— did not ſuffer her to remain long in the error his laſt words had occaſioned.

'If lady Meadows was not ſuch a bigot,' purſued he, 'excuſe my freedom, Miſs, we might expect that ſhe would receive my propoſals with pleaſure, and make ſuch conceſſions in favour of her niece, as might engage my father's conſent to our marriage: but ſince this is hopeleſs, is it reaſonable that you ſhould be the victim of her obſtinacy? by ſeeming only to comply with your aunt's deſires; all obſtacles to our union will be removed; a temporary compliance is all that is neceſſary to ſecure to you a fortune, and a rank in life ſuitable to your birth. Do not imagine that I wiſh to ſee you a proſelyte to the religion ſhe profeſſes: no, if any thing could weaken my paſſion, your being capable of ſuch a change, upon intereſted motives, would do it. I love you; I repeat it again, I love you for your piety.'

'Then, to be ſure, my lord,' replied Henrietta, 'you think that a little diſſimulation in this caſe would be a virtue.'

'In your circumſtances,' reſumed lord B——, it certainly would; for while your principles are unchanged, what do you ſacrifice, in yielding to your aunt, but externals only? this ſacrifice your intereſt, your happineſs demands of you; let me add alſo that you owe it to a man who loves you with the ardor I do. And ſurely, to induſtriouſly ſeek occaſions of ſuffering for a religion, which, if you could be contented with ſecretly profeſſing, you would be happy yourſelf, and make others happy alſo, is to give the world reaſon to ſuſpect that oſtentation has a greater ſhare in your reſolves than piety. Therefore, my dear Miſs Courteney, you ſee it is not the ſacrifice of your religion that I require of you, but of the reputation of ſuffering for it.'

'Well, my lord,' replied Henrietta, who had liſtened to him with great calmneſs, 'if ever I was in doubt of your intentions, you have clearly explained them now; of them, and of the ſentiments you have avowed, you may collect my opinion, when I declare to you, that if you had worlds to beſtow on me, I would not be your wife.'

'Is this your reſolution, Miſs Courteney?' ſaid his lordſhip.

'It is, my lord (ſhe replied). A reſolution juſtifiable upon your own great principle intereſt. It is my intereſt I conſult, when I prefer poverty and ſervitude to the fortune my aunt can give me; becauſe the ſilent teſtimony of a quiet conſcience is, in my opinion, of infinitely more value than riches. It is intereſt by which I am influenced, when I refuſe your offered alliance, becauſe I am ſure I could not be happy with a man whom I cannot eſteem.'

'Hold, Madam, hold,' interrupted lord B——, 'this is too much: I have not deſerved this treatment, but I thank you for it; yes, from my ſoul I thank you for it: it has helped to reſtore my ſenſes; I have been fooliſh, very fooliſh, I confeſs.'

His lordſhip indeed looked fooliſh enough when he pronounced theſe words, which were ſucceeded by a

pause of several minutes: then suddenly starting from his seat, and bowing with an affected negligence,

'The best apology I can make, Madam (said he), for the importunate visit I have paid you, is to assure you I never will repeat it.'

Henrietta courtesied gravely without answering him; and having rung the bell for a servant to attend him to the door, went into the room where her friend was sitting. Lord B—— stopped, looked back, and, finding she had withdrawn, he rushed out hastily, and flung himself into his chair, glad of his escape, and congratulating himself upon the victory he had gained over his passion; for, in the first emotions of his grief at parting, he had almost resolved to declare he would marry her without any fortune: but her disappearing so suddenly, gave him time for a moment's reflection, and that was sufficient to hinder him from being guilty of an imprudence which he now trembled at the thoughts of.

It is so difficult for mean and selfish persons to conceive that any thing but private advantage can influence the resolutions of others, that notwithstanding the proof Henrietta had given of her attachment to her religion, and her inviolable regard to truth, yet still lord B—— supposed there must be some other latent motive for a conduct, in his opinion, highly ridiculous, and very inconsistent with that good sense which it was apparent she possessed.

Sometimes he fancied he had a rival; and then, to clear a doubt so tormenting, he was upon the point of returning to her to offer her his hand upon her own conditions: but his avarice restrained him from making so dangerous a trial: she might accept his offer; and with all the passion he felt for her, he could not resolve to marry her without a fortune.

To stifle a thought which suggested to him designs so destructive to his interest, he endeavoured to persuade himself that her obstinacy, in refusing to temporize a little when such mighty advantages were in view, was the effect of female vanity, which sought distinction at the expence of solid happiness. In this opinion he was

confirmed by his friend, whom he had employed to found the earl her uncle with regard to his proposals, and to whom he now communicated the result of his interview with Henrietta.

'Depend upon it,' said this sagacious person, 'your goddess will descend from her romantic flights, when she finds she has almost soared out of human ken; and is much more likely to be laughed at for her extravagant folly, than admired and applauded for her extraordinary piety. Follow my advice, pursued he, suffer your mistress to believe you have broke her chains; if interest does not make her wish to recal you, vanity will. Few women can endure that a lover should escape them; and, to recover their influence, they often make concessions, which, in the zenith of their power, they would have thought impossible.'

Lord B— improved a little upon his friend's scheme, and resolved to continue his addresses to Miss Cordwain, to pique Henrietta, he said; but in reality, he was as much in love with the fortune of that young lady, as with the person of our fair heroine; and was not willing to hazard the loss of the one, while it was yet doubtful whether he should ever possess the other.

CHAP. VII.

Which concludes the Fourth Book of this History.

HENRIETTA having acquainted Mrs. Willis with what had passed in her interview with lord B——, the good woman, who had flattered herself that the affair would have ended more happily (though more honourably it could not) for her fair friend, conjured her with tears of anxious tenderness, not to think of going to service again, but to allow the countess, whom her conduct with regard to her son must necessarily oblige very highly, to employ her good offices with lady Meadows in her favour, that a reconciliation might be effected, without those shocking conditions which had at first been proposed to her.

'If I thought such an application would be successful,' replied Henrietta, 'I would readily consent to it. For you may easily imagine, my dear Mrs. Willis, that

this low condition is not my choice: but I know my aunt's temper; whatever ſhe deſires, ſhe deſires with ardor; and makes a merit at perſiſting obſtinately in a reſolution ſhe has once formed. Her pride will be a more powerful advocate for me, than any thing the counteſs can urge; to that I formerly owed my deliverance from dependence, more mortifying than ſervitude. This pride will no doubt be ſenſibly wounded, when ſhe finds that I am determined in my choice; if any thing can make her recede from her purpoſe, it will be the ſhame of ſeeing her niece reduced ſo low. But ſurely it is not the way to convince her I am really determined, if I allow my friends to teaze her with ſolicitations, when ſhe has already declared her reſolution in ſuch ſtrong terms: ſhe will believe that I have engaged them to make this trial; ſhe will be offended with their interpoſition, and perhaps be the leſs inclined to raiſe me from this obſcure condition, as ſhe will not have the merit of doing it from her own generoſity and tenderneſs, but at the inſtances of others: time only, my dear Mrs. Willis, can produce any favourable change in my circumſtances; it will either ſoften the hearts of my relations, or it will blunt my ſenſe of the meanneſs of my condition, by familiarizing me to it. This I am ſure of at leaſt, that, in the conſciouſneſs of doing right, I ſhall always find an unfailing ſource of happineſs, however Providence may think fit to diſpoſe of me.'

'Ah, never doubt but you are the care of Providence, my dear Miſs,' cried Mrs. Willis, 'ſuch virtue and piety muſt ſooner or later be happy: Heaven and your own prudence direct you.'

'I have not always been prudent,' ſaid Henrietta, ſighing; 'but misfortunes, as you once told me, teach us wiſdom.'

Mrs. Willis, obſerving an unuſual penſiveneſs ſtealing over the ſweet features of Henrietta on this reflection, changed the diſcourſe to a leſs intereſting ſubject, and employed her utmoſt aſſiduity and tenderneſs to make the time ſhe ſtayed with her paſs agreeably.

A week being elapſed, and no meſſage coming from

lady D——, Henrietta began to apprehend that she should be disappointed of a place, in which she expected more satisfaction than she had found in those she had hitherto been in, when she was surprised with a visit from the countess of ——.

She flew to receive her with a respectful joy. The lady tenderly pressed her hand—

'I had business in the city (said she) and I took this opportunity to call on you—and how do you do, my dear good girl? (pursued she) have you any agreeable news to tell me? has your family relented yet?'

'I have no reason to think they have, Madam,' replied Henrietta.

'Shocking insensibility!' exclaimed the countess, lifting up her eyes; 'you have been very ill used too by Mrs. Autumn, my sister tells me.'

Henrietta smiled, but was silent.

'Well, Miss Courtenay,' resumed the countess, 'will you come and live with me as my friend and companion. I know your generous scorn of dependence; but it is the unworthiness of the donor only, that can make benefits sit heavy on a mind like yours; there is often as much greatness of soul in receiving as in conferring benefits: and when true friendship is the motive for giving, it is pride, not generosity, to refuse.'

'Do me the justice to believe, Madam,' replied Henrietta, that I receive this instance of your goodness with the deepest gratitude, but there is ——'

'I understand you,' interrupted the countess—'my son; but I hope, when he is married, you will have no objection to living with me as my friend.'

The countess, in speaking these words, looked earnestly on Henrietta.

'No, certainly, Madam (cried she, eagerly), I shall think myself happy in living with you in any situation.'

'I know not what to think of my son's conduct in this affair,' resumed the countess; 'every thing is settled between my lord and the young lady's father; but he still finds pretences to delay the match.' Her eyes,

as she pronounced these words, seemed to demand an explanation of Henrietta.

'I am afraid, Madam (replied she) that I have been partly the cause of these delays.'

'That is candidly said,' interrupted the countess; 'have you seen my son lately?'

'I have, Madam,' answered Henrietta; 'but your ladyship may be entirely easy.'

'Easy!' repeated the countess; 'why do you imagine that I am so insensible of your merit—but you know, my good girl, lord B—— is in honour engaged to Miss Cordwain.'

'His lordship's partiality for me,' said Henrietta, 'has induced him to carry this matter further than (as he is circumstanced) I think he should have done. He has caused my uncle to be applied to; but this has produced nothing, Madam. I told lord B—— upon what conditions my aunt had offered to settle her estate upon me; and his lordship is convinced that I cannot comply with them. My resolution is fixed, my lord B— knows it is so, and you have nothing to fear, Madam, from any imprudence on his side, or any ungenerosity on mine. I ventured to promise that I would deserve the confidence you was pleased to place in me on this occasion, and I hope I have and shall continue to deserve it.'

Notwithstanding the delicate manner in which Henrietta stated the affair between her and lord B——, yet the countess discovered that her son had shewn more prudence than generosity, or even love in his behaviour; and, by a strange contradiction in the human heart, she at once approved and condemned, was pleased with, yet ashamed of his conduct; but charmed with Henrietta's noble disinterestedness, her candour and sincerity, she embraced her with the tenderness of a mother, and perhaps with the more tenderness, because it was not likely she should be her mother.

'I am impatient, said she, till I can have you with me, that I may have it my power to shew you how greatly I both love and esteem you.'

Henrietta thanked her with great politeneſs; and then told her of lady D——'s intentions to recommend her to a young lady, a relation of her's.

'Oh! Miſs Belmour, you mean,' ſaid the counteſs; 'my ſiſter mentioned it to me: ſhe is an agreeable young woman, has a very good fortune, and is entirely miſtreſs of herſelf. She will be much better pleaſed to receive you in the character of a companion than a ſervant, when ſhe knows your birth and merit.'

'I will owe obligations of that kind to none but yourſelf, Madam,' replied Henrietta; 'and I beg this young lady may know no more of me than is neceſſary to recommend me to her good opinion as a ſervant.'

The counteſs conteſted this point with her for ſome time; but finding her not to be diſſuaded from her deſigns, 'Well!' ſaid ſhe, kindly, 'you ſhall be indulged this once, but remember I claim your promiſe to come to me when a certain objection is removed; in the mean time we will ſettle you with Miſs Belmour in the way you chuſe. She will be with my ſiſter to-morrow morning; and if you come likewiſe, lady D—— will introduce you to her.'

Henrietta ſaid ſhe would not fail to attend lady D— Upon which the counteſs roſe up, kiſſed her at parting, and deſired ſhe would look upon her as one of her moſt faithful friends.

Our fair heroine had reaſon to be ſatisfied with the kind manner in which lady D—— recommended her to Miſs Belmour, as well as with the reception that young lady gave her. She carried her home with her in her coach, and behaved to her with an affability that Henrietta could no otherwiſe account for, than by ſuppoſing the counteſs had diſcovered her true name and circumſtances to her.—In this, however, ſhe was miſtaken: her young miſtreſs was in love; ſhe had occaſion for a confidant. Henrietta's youth and gentleneſs promiſed her ſhe would be an indulgent one: beſides, her good ſenſe and the elegance of her perſon and behaviour ſo leſſened the diſtance between the miſtreſs and ſervant, that her pride was not wounded by the fami-

liarity with which ſhe condeſcended to treat her, as the neceſſary prelude to the confidence ſhe was reſolved to repoſe in her.

Henrietta liſtened with complaiſance to the overflowings of a heart tender by nature, and wholly poſſeſſed, as ſhe thought, by a deſerving object; but when Miſs Belmour, in the courſe of frequent converſations on this exhauſtleſs theme, gave her to underſtand that this lover of whom ſhe boaſted was the huſband of another lady, from whom he had been parted ſeveral years, ſurpriſe, horror, grief, were ſo ſtrongly impreſſed on her countenance, that her lady began to repent of a confeſſion ſhe had made, in full confidence that her ſentiments, whatever they were, muſt needs be approved by her ſervant.

But it being now uſeleſs as well as dangerous to retract what ſhe had ſaid, ſhe was under a neceſſity of ſubmitting to the mortifying taſk of defending her conduct to one whoſe duty as well as intereſt ſhe had a moment before conceived it to be, to acquieſce in, or rather applaud as ſhe did.

She began with telling Henrietta, that Mr. Campley had, when very young, been forced, by an avaricious father to marry a woman whom he could not love, and with whom he had been ſo miſerable, that a ſeparation was agreed to by the relations on both ſides.

Henrietta ſighed ſympathetically at this account. Miſs Belmour, encouraged by this mark of her ſenſibility, proceeded with great fluency of language, to expatiate on the reſiſtleſs power of love: her lover's ſophiſtry had furniſhed her with arguments to prove, that the marriage he had been forced into was not binding in the ſight of heaven, and that he was at liberty to beſtow his affections elſewhere. She treated marriage as a mere human inſtitution, adopted the ſentiments of Eloiſa, talked of an union of hearts, eternal conſtancy, generous confidence—Henrietta heard her with patience: but being out of breath at laſt, ſhe ſtopped, and ſeemed to expect a reply.

Our fair heroine, with all the humility becoming her

ſtation, but at the ſame time with all the firmneſs of virtue, oppoſed the ſpecious arguments ſhe had urged with others which reaſon, religion, and the purity of her own ſentiments ſuggeſted to her: theſe, however, made very little impreſſion on Miſs Belmour. She yawned, ſmiled contemptuouſly, and was ſeveral times ready to interrupt her with an authoritative air, but refrained, from the conſideration that her woman was now, by the participation of her ſecret, become her companion, if not ſomething more.

Henrietta, deſpairing to reſcue her unhappy miſtreſs, by motives of piety, from the ſnares that were laid for her, ſought even to intereſt her paſſions in the cauſe of virtue.

'You depend, Madam, purſued ſhe, upon your lover's conſtancy; but what ſecurity can you have that he will be conſtant?'

'What ſecurity!' interrupted Miſs Belmour, rouſed to attention by ſo intereſting a queſtion; 'his vows.'

'Theſe vows, Madam, ſaid Henrietta, will expire with the paſſion that cauſed them: he will be conſtant as long as he loves, but how long he will love, is the doubt.'

'I am really vain enough to imagine,' replied Miſs Belmour, bridling, 'that thoſe few attractions I have received from nature, ſince they have gained, will fix his heart: I am quite free from any apprehenſions of that ſort, I can aſſure you.'

'You have charms, Madam,' ſaid Henrietta, 'that entitle you to a worthier conqueſt than of a man, who not having it in his power to marry you, yet diſhonourably ſeeks to enſnare your affections.'

'It is natural to wiſh to be beloved by thoſe we love,' replied Miſs Belmour: 'I am convinced Mr. Campley loves me.'

'If he loved you ſincerely, Madam,' ſaid Henrietta, 'he would not make you unhappy; true love never ſeeks the ruin of its object: diſintereſtedneſs is the teſt of love; try Mr. Campley's by that.'

'Mr. Campley has no mean, felfifh defigns upon my fortune,' cried Mifs Belmour.

'His defigns are mean and felfifh in the higheft degree,' replied Henrietta, 'fince he expects that to make him happy you fhould facrifice your peace, your honour, and your reputation; and fhould he fucceed in thefe defigns, which heaven forbid, the neglect he will foon treat you with will convince you, that love, when not founded on efteem, cannot be lafting: for the contempt which even libertines feel for thofe whom they have feduced, is a proof of that fecret homage which all men pay to virtue.'

'If I thought Mr. Campley would ever fail in the refpect and adoration he pays me now,' faid Mifs Belmour, 'I fhould hate him.'

'The only way to preferve that refpect, Madam,' replied Henrietta, 'is not to allow him to encourage any prefumptuous hopes: if you wifh to keep his heart, engage his efteem; he may one time or other, perhaps, be at liberty to offer you his hand.'

'Ah, Henrietta!' interrupted Mifs Belmour, fighing, 'that time is very diftant, I fear: but you have put ftrange thoughts into my head; I have been to blame to fuffer Mr. Campley to talk to me fo freely of his paffion: indeed I think he has been lefs refpectful fince I fuffered him to perceive that I preferred him to all the men I ever faw. I own to you freely that it was my apprehenfion of lofing him that made me liften to his arguments; for I thought, if I reduced him to defpair, he would conquer his paffion for me: but what if the very means I have ufed to keep his heart fhould prove the caufe of his flighting me!—Oh! you do not know what anxious, uneafy doubts you have raifed in my mind!—However, I am refolved to behave with more referve to him for the future. I will try whether his paffion is ftrong enough to fubfift of itfelf; for you have convinced me that the hopes with which I have hitherto fed it, have been lefs likely to nourifh than to cloy.'

Henrietta would have been better pleafed if fentiments

more pure had ſuggeſted this deſign; but it was a great point gained to prevail with her on any terms to diſcourage the addreſſes of a man whoſe love was a crime. She flattered herſelf likewiſe that this unexpected ſeverity in Miſs Belmour would produce an alteration in her unworthy lover's behaviour, which might favour her views of exciting her reſentment againſt him; and in this ſhe was not miſtaken.

Mr. Campley thought fit to be offended at the new plan of conduct Miſs Belmour had laid down for herſelf, and complained of it at firſt with that mixture of haughtineſs and ſubmiſſion which a man, who is ſure he is beloved, thinks he has a right to uſe; but, finding this had not the effect he deſired, he had recourſe to a perſonated indifference, in order to alarm her with the fear of loſing him.

Henrietta, who ſhe acquainted with every change in his behaviour, told her that this was the time to humble her imperious lover. 'You muſt either give him laws, Madam, ſaid ſhe, or be contented to receive them of him: his aim was to degrade you to a miſtreſs; he will love you, you ſee, upon no other condition.'

'I ſee it! I ſee it plainly!' interrupted Miſs Belmour, burſting into tears; 'where is now that aweful love he profeſſed for me, when a look, a ſmile, was a ſufficient reward for all his ſufferings!—Dear Henrietta tell me what I ſhall do to ſhew him how much I hate and deſpiſe him.'

'Avoid him, Madam, as much as poſſible,' replied Henrietta. 'When you happen to meet him in company, ſuffer him not to ſpeak to you apart, and receive no letters from him; perſiſt in this conduct, and you will convince him that you are reſolved not to purchaſe the continuance of his affection by the ſacrifice of your honour. If he is capable of a ſincere and generous paſſion, he will eſteem and reverence that virtue which oppoſes his deſires; and his eſteem will ſtrengthen his love.'

'Yes,' cried Miſs Belmour, 'he ſhall find that he is not ſo ſure of me as he has the preſumption to imagine.

I will tell him so myself, and see him again, but it shall be only to declare that I will never see him more —Give me pen and ink, my dear Henrietta: I will appoint him a meeting at lady D——'s this evening; and while the company is engaged at cards, I shall have an opportunity to tell him the resolution I have formed, and doubt not but I will speak to him in the severest terms my resentment can suggest: he shall know, to his confusion, that I am in earnest.'

'Indeed, Madam,' said Henrietta, 'that is not the way to persuade him that you are in earnest; let your actions speak for you; shun him carefully, and then he must be convinced that you do not feign.'

'I have thought of a way to torment him,' said Miss Belmour, after a little pause; 'I will go to Paris. Last year some ladies of my acquaintance proposed to me to go there with them, and I had almost consented; but the wretch, who braves me so insolently now, declared then that he could not support my absence, and seemed so overwhelmed with grief, that I put off my journey for that time: but now were he to offer to stab himself at my feet, it should not alter my purpose. I will write to him this moment, and let him know my design.'

'Let me intreat you, Madam,' said Henrietta, 'not to do that; go first, and write to him afterwards—And yet I could recommend a better way of punishing this insolent lover.'

'Tell me what better way,' cried Miss Belmour, eagerly.

'It is to marry, Madam,' replied Henrietta; 'chuse out of that crowd of lovers who address you, him whom you think most deserving. Marriage will secure your peace, your honour, and reputation, and effectually punish the man who made the sacrifice of all these, the necessary condition of his love for you.'

This expedient was not at all approved of by Miss Belmour. She declared she hated the whole sex for Mr. Campley's sake; and Henrietta had no difficulty to believe her: however, she prevailed with her to promise

that ſhe would keep her intended journey ſecret till ſhe was juſt ready to depart, that it might not ſeem as if ſhe meant only to alarm her deſigning lover. This promiſe ſhe obſerved ſo ill, that ſhe declared that very day at lady D——'s, her intention to ſpend a few months in Paris. Mr. Campley, who was there, and who ſtill kept up his aſſumed indifference, inſtead of endeavouring to alter her purpoſe, as ſhe expected, coldly congratulated her on the pleaſures ſhe would enjoy in that enchanting metropolis. Miſs Belmour came home ready to burſt with rage and diſappointment.

'I knew how it would be, Madam,' ſaid Henrietta, 'if you talked of your deſign. Mr. Campley thinks he ſees the artifice of it: all you can do now is to haſten your departure.'

'I am reſolved I'll ſet out to-morrow morning,' ſaid Miſs Belmour. 'No matter for prepartions; pack up a few neceſſaries to take with us in the coach, and leave directions for my trunks to be ſent after. When we come to Dover, if there is not a packet-boat ready to ſail, I'll hire one at any price: I ſhall not be at reſt till I have convinced this man I am really determined to avoid him.'

Henrietta kept up this ſpirit; and after ſhe had given proper directions to the houſekeeper, and ſent orders for the coach to be ready early in the morning, ſhe buſied herſelf in packing up, her lady aſſiſting, in a violent flutter of ſpirits, and wiſhing impatiently for the hour of departure.

Our fair heroine had ſome objections to taking this journey herſelf, but her concern for Miſs Belmour overruled them all. She was not willing to leave unfiniſhed the good work ſhe had begun; and ſhe was apprehenſive that, if the young lady was left to the guidance of her own paſſions, this ſudden ſally of reſentment would end in a reconciliation fatal to her virtue.

She would have been glad to ſee the counteſs before ſhe went, but there was no time for this viſit; therefore ſhe contented herſelf with writing to that lady, and to her friend Mrs. Willis. The counteſs received the

news of this journey with great pleaſure, becauſe ſhe hoped that abſence would effectually cure her ſon's paſſion for Henrietta, the conſequences of which ſhe was ſtill apprehenſive of, notwithſtanding he had ſhewn an extraordinary prudence in the conduct of it.

But Mrs. Willis was very uneaſy, leſt any thing ſhould happen that might make her repent the removing thus from all her friends, and putting herſelf entirely in the power of a ſtranger. Had there been time for it, ſhe would have endeavoured to diſſuade Henrietta from going; but, recollecting that Mr. Bale was in France, and that they might poſſibly meet, ſhe reſolved to write to the old gentleman, and give him a full account of every thing relating to the ſituation of his fair perſecuted ward, not even omitting his ſon's doubtful behaviour with regard to her; for ſhe knew, that if they met, Henrietta would be ſilent upon that article, and yet it was neceſſary he ſhould know it, that he might be convinced her misfortunes were chiefly owing to his ſon's treachery; and this conſideration ſhe hoped would produce ſomething to her advantage.

BOOK V.

CHAP. I.

Contains an Adventure, in which our Heroine is more than ordinarily intereſted.

IN the mean time, our fair travellers, having regulated their affairs in the beſt manner the extreme hurry they were in would admit, ſet out for Dover in Miſs Belmour's coach. That young lady, ſtill agitated with the violence of her reſentment, which Henrietta took care ſhould not abate, and elated with the hope of reducing her lover to deſpair, by thus leaving him, thought the horſes went too ſlow for her impatience. She wiſhed for wings to convey her at once far from him, and declared that ſhe never deſired to ſee him more; yet Henrietta obſerved that ſhe frequently looked out of the windows with an air of anxious expectation, and would ſigh when ſhe drew in her head again, as if

she had been disappointed—Doubtless she had conceived hopes that her lover would follow her; and, considering this neglect as a new proof of his indifference, it redoubled her rage, and strengthened a resolution which reason and virtue had very little share in.

This thought gave Henrietta great concern: her conversion promised no great permanency, since it was founded on such motives; but all she could now do was to manage her passions, for the time was not yet come, to touch her heart by sentiments of piety and virtue.

On their arrival at Dover, they found the Calais packet-boat ready to sail. Miss Belmour, who would fain have lingered at Dover a day, was not much pleased with this circumstance, but her pride was concerned not to betray any irresolution; accordingly she embarked with a tolerable good grace; and the wind continuing fair, they soon landed at Calais.

Miss Belmour having made the journey before, was under no embarrassment how to conduct herself. The customary ceremonies at landing being over, she proceeded to the inn she had formerly been at; and having hired a post chaise for herself and Henrietta, and a horse for her servant, she set out immediately after dinner, and reached Boulogne that evening.

As the chaise stopped at the inn they put up at, two gentlemen alighted from their horses at the same time; one of whom hearing they were English ladies advanced, and respectfully offered them his hand to help them out. Miss Belmour, pleased with the graceful appearance of this stranger, politely accepted his assistance, which he likewise tendered to Henrietta, whose charms, at the first glance, made a powerful impression on his heart.

His eyes told her this so intelligibly, that she was under some confusion; yet she found in herself a kind of satisfaction at the attention with which he gazed on her, and was now for the first time sensible to the pleasure of charming; but, accustomed to watch carefully over the motions of her own mind, she checked this rising vanity; and a little ashamed of the folly she discovered in herself, she hastily withdrew her hand, which he still

held, as not being master enough of himself to part with it, though she was already out of the chaise; and thanking him by a graceful courtesy for his civility, she followed Miss Belmour into the room the landlady had conducted her to.

The young gentleman stood gazing after her as long as she was in sight; then turning to his friend, who was giving some orders to their footmen,

'Oh, Charles!' cried he, with a look half serious, half gay, 'my fatal hour is come.'

'What! I'll warrant you,' said the other, 'you are shot through the heart with the glances of the younger of those ladies; I observed how you gazed on her.'

'Is she not a charming creature?' exclaimed the first; 'what features! what a complexion! what elegance in her whole form!—I am sure she has wit; I saw her soul in her eyes.'

'Faith! I am half concerned for you,' interrupted Charles, with an affected seriousness: this will be an unfortunate encounter, I am afraid.'

'Can we not think of some method to introduce ourselves to them?' cried the other, without minding what he had said: 'I shall not rest till I find out who they are.'

'What will it signify to you to know,' replied Charles: 'they are going to Paris, and we to London.'

'Why aye, that is true,' said the other, we shall go different ways in the morning; and yet—what think you, my dear Charles, of going back to Paris for a few days, and we shall have an opportunity of escorting these fair travellers?—Come, it will be but a frolic, and I know you are no enemy to them.'

'I don't like this frolic,' replied Charles! 'it has too serious an air: sure you are strangely charmed with this girl—Just upon the point of seeing your father and your family! after a long absence, and so suddenly to resolve upon protracting your stay from them—I don't half like it I confess, and this once, my lord, I must oppose your inclinations.'

'Oh, Sir, you are grave!' replied his lordſhip, a little ſullenly, 'you have a mind to exert the governor too; but let me tell you, that, conſidering the equality of our years and the terms we have hitherto lived upon, this wiſdom is very unſeaſonable.'

'The young lord, having ſaid this with ſome emotion, haſtily entered the houſe; and calling the inn-keeper to ſhew him a room, went away, without taking any farther notice of his governor, who ſtood muſing for ſome time after he was gone, and then followed him with an intention to bring him, if poſſible, to reaſon.

Upon his entering the room, he found his pupil leaning on a table, with a diſcontented air. He juſt raiſed his head to ſee who it was that came in; and immediately reſumed his former poſture, without ſpeaking a word.

The governor looked at him a moment in ſilence; at laſt,

'This penſiveneſs, ſaid he, and this cauſeleſs reſentment; are they not ſtrong arguments againſt my complying with your propoſal? The impreſſion this girl has made on your heart muſt needs be very great, ſince it can make you already forget that friendſhip you have vowed for me, and in which I placed ſo much happineſs.'

'It is you, not I, who ſeems to have forgot our mutual friendſhip,' replied the young nobleman, melted at thoſe laſt words: 'Why did you, my dear Charles, loſe the beloved friend and companion in the auſtere governor? Is not this ſtrange affectation!'

'Indeed,' my lord,' replied the governor, 'I ſhould be unworthy the title of your friend, if I was not attentive to your intereſt.'

'Was there ever any thing ſo abſurd,' interrupted his lordſhip, 'to make a ſerious affair of a little idle curioſity!'

'Don't you make a ſerious affair of it,' replied the governor, 'and I ſhall be contented.'

'Well, then, you conſent to go back to Paris with me,' ſaid the pupil.

'If you are resolved to go,' answered the governor, 'to be sure I will go with you.'

'Now you are my friend again,' said the young lord, hugging him: 'I promise you, I will not stay long in Paris; but we must be Freeman and Melvil again, my dear Charles—Ah, how many pleasant adventures have we had under those names!'

'If this proves of no greater consequence,' resumed the young governor, 'I shall not regret coming into your scheme; but I confess I am alarmed at your eagerness to follow this young woman. She seems to have made no slight impression on your heart; there is danger in these sort of attachments; how do you know how far this may lead you?'

'What strange notions have entered your head!' said the young nobleman; 'it is hardly worth while to make a serious answer to them: but this you may depend upon, that I never will follow my inclinations in opposition to the duty I owe my father. And now, what do you think will become of this dangerous attachment; but,' added he, smiling, 'we must make our fellow-travellers a visit; these inns are charming places for shortening the ceremonies of a first introduction.' He rang the bell, without waiting for his friends answer, and, one of his servants appearing, he ordered him to present Mr. Freeman's and his compliments to the two English ladies, with a request that they would permit them to wait upon them.

Henrietta felt her heart flutter at this message; yet her natural reserve made her wish Miss Belmour would decline the visit of these young gentlemen. However, that lady returned a civil answer, and permission for them to come.

Henrietta, sensible of an agitation which she had never known before, would have chose not to have shared this visit; but it was not possible to avoid it: Miss Belmour had obliged her to throw off the character of a servant, and to live with her upon the footing of a friend and companion; to which Henrietta was induced to consent, by the hope she had, that this fami-

liarity would furnish her with opportunities to guard her unhappy mistress against the evils into which her blind passion was hurrying her.

To this mark of consideration and esteem Miss Belmour added a most affectionate behaviour, which entirely won the heart of the tender and grateful Henrietta: for nothing so much resembles true friendship, as those connections which lovers form with persons whom they make the confidants of their passion.

Thus circumstanced, Henrietta was obliged to receive the compliments of Mr. Melvil and his friend, as well as her lady, who, soon after, fell into a fit of musing, that made it necessary for our fair heroine to keep up the conversation with the two gentlemen, which she did with that sprightliness and vivacity so natural to her.

The graces of her wit, the easy elegance of her manners, and the modest dignity of her deportment, formed new chains for the heart of Melvil. He looked on his friend with an exulting air: his eyes challenged his admiration of the woman, whose merit justified the sentiments he entertained for her.

At parting, he told the ladies, that, since he was going to Paris, as well as they, he hoped they would allow him the pleasure of escorting them; and that he would regulate his journey entirely by their's.

Henrietta, who well remembered to have seen these travellers taking the very contrary route, was a little surprised at this declaration; but Miss Belmour, absorbed in her own reflections, was wholly ignorant of that circumstance; and, considering this offer in no other light than that of general politeness, she received it with her usual complaisance.

The youth and beauty of the two ladies made their apparent independent situation a matter of curiosity to Mr. Freeman, as well as the profound melancholy in which one of them seemed buried.

Melvil was little concerned in these inquiries; all his thoughts were taken up with the perfections he found in her who had charmed him; and he was much less

solicitous

folicitous to difcover who fhe was, than how to make himfelf agreeable to her. He found fhe was not married, by the other lady's giving her the title of Mifs when fhe fpoke to her; and he was perfectly fatisfied with this knowledge. Confcious of the ardor with which he already loved this fair ftranger, he was apprehenfive of awakening the fears of his friend, by dwelling too long on her praifes; but he received the teftimony, which Freeman could not help giving to her merit, with fuch an undifgufted tranfport, as drew from him fome ferious admonitions, which he rallied off with a fprightly air, and then changed the difcourfe to a lefs interefting fubject.

CHAP. II.

Which fhews that it is eafier to be wife for others than ourfelves.

THOUGH Mifs Belmour's melancholy had hindered her from taking any great fhare in the converfation during this vifit, yet her mind was ftill free enough to obferve, that Henrietta had made an impreffion upon the heart of Mr. Melvil. She congratulated her, fmiling, upon her conqueft; nor did her raillery even fpare her: for Henrietta, who, for a full hour, had appeared animated with an extraordinary vivacity, became all on a fudden penfive and filent. This change exactly commenced at the time Mr. Melvil went away; but fhe did not perceive it herfelf, and ftarted, as from a dream, when Mifs Belmour reproached her with it.

Concerned that fhe had given room for a fufpicion of this nature, fhe began, as foon as fhe was alone, to examine her own heart: Mifs Belmour had praifed the perfonal graces of Mr. Melvil, and it was but juftice to own, that he was eminently handfome; but was fhe weak enough to be dazzled with the beauty of a man? No, certainly; his countenance pleafed her, becaufe it was a picture of his mind; candor, fweetnefs, benevolence, fhined in every feature: the politenefs of his addrefs, his gentle manners, that air fo noble, yet fo peculiarly foft and engaging, his good fenfe, and above

all, the juſtneſs and purity of his ſentiments, which ſhe had time enough to diſcover during their converſation; were not theſe qualities which a modeſt young woman might eſteem; and is love a neceſſary conſequence of eſteeming one of that ſex? Muſt ſhe deny herſelf the pleaſure of approving virtue and merit, for fear of loving it too much? It was thus ſhe argued, and ſoon diſpelled thoſe doubts which Miſs Belmour's raillery had raiſed in her mind.

While Henrietta, under the notion of barely eſteeming what was indeed truly worthy of eſteem, was inſenſibly giving way to more tender ſentiments, Mr. Melvil, who loved with all the tenderneſs and ardor of a firſt paſſion, as his really was, burned with impatience for the hour when they were to join the fair travellers: Freeman directed his attention to Miſs Belmour, which gave the young lover an opportunity of employing his whole care and aſſiduity about his miſtreſs, who aſcribed all to his natural politeneſs, and remained in a perfect tranquillity, as well with regard to his ſentiments as her own. Miſs Belmour's experience, however, ſoon let her into the ſecrets of their hearts. Melvil's paſſion was indeed apparent enough, notwithſtanding the pains he was at to conceal it, through fear of his friend's troubleſome remonſtrances; but Henrietta's, though hid from herſelf, was open to Miſs Belmour's diſcerning eyes, and ſhe exulted in the diſcovery.

This rigid cenſurer of her conduct; this inflexibly virtuous maid, was entangled in the ſnares of love. She perceived that ſhe herſelf was ignorant of her own danger, and ſhe was reſolved not to draw her out of this falſe ſecurity by any unſeaſonable railleries: for, however uſeful the ſtrict principles of Henrietta had been to her, yet ſhe could not bear the ſuperiority they gave her; and ſhe rejoiced in the hope, that a paſſion, perhaps as unfortunately placed as her own, would reduce her to an equality with her.

Their journey now drew near a period: Melvil trembled at the thoughts of parting; he had indeed laid the foundation of an intimacy with the two ladies, which

would give him a right to viſit them in Paris; but he had been uſed to ſee the object of his paſſion continually from the firſt moment of his acquaintance with her: and although they never ſeparated till the evening, yet he thought the time amazingly long till they met again. How then would he be able to ſupport an abſence of two or three days, which decorum would oblige him to make the interval of his viſits? beſides, ſhe was ſtill ignorant of the ſentiments ſhe had inſpired him with. Hitherto he had never found an opportunity of ſpeaking to her alone; but if one ſhould offer, how could he declare himſelf to a woman, for whom he felt as much reſpect as love? yet one, whoſe birth he was ignorant of, who ſeemed to be in a dependent ſituation, whom he could not think of marrying, and whom he durſt not wiſh to ſeduce.

The difficulties he could not remove he endeavoured to baniſh from his thoughts; and, without conſidering what muſt be the event of the paſſion he was thus indulging, he for the preſent confined all his wiſhes to the pleaſure of ſeeing her.

Miſs Belmour had often wondered that this young lover ſhewed ſo little ſolicitude to make opportunities of ſpeaking to his miſtreſs in private. She could not impute this behaviour to want of ardor; every look he gave her was expreſſive of the tenderneſs his ſoul was filled with: it was then reſpect, it was awe, it was fear of offending, that laid him under this reſtraint. How glorious this for Henrietta! how humiliating for her, who had ſcarce eſcaped falling a ſacrifice to the diſhonourable attempts of her lover! Was ſhe then leſs capable of inſpiring a reſpectful paſſion than her woman? or did her charms act more powerfully on the heart ſhe had ſubdued, than thoſe of Henrietta? This queſtion her ſelf love eaſily decided; and, from the ſame ſentiment, ſhe was perſuaded that Henrietta, with all her boaſted virtue, would defend herſelf as weakly againſt the lover her inclinations declared for, as ſhe had done. Her preſent triumph, ſhe thought, was leſs owing to

her own ſtrength than her lover's weakneſs, who had not yet made a formal attack upon her heart: curioſity to know what effect the declaration of his paſſion would have, made her reſolve to give him an opportunity of ſpeaking to her in private. They were now within a day's journey of Paris. On their arrival at the houſe where they were to dine, Mr. Freeman, as uſual, went to give orders for their entertainment, and left Melvil with the two ladies. Miſs Belmour, pretending that ſhe had a mind for ſome particular diſh, ran after him, and kept him in converſation, that he might not interrupt the lovers, who being now for the firſt time alone together, were both equally embarraſſed.

Henrietta caſt down her eyes, ſurpriſed at the confuſion in which ſhe found herſelf, and ſhocked at the intelligence this new emotion gave her of the true ſtate of her heart. Mr. Melvil approached her trembling; he could not reſolve to loſe ſo favourable an opportunity of declaring his ſentiments to her: but the natural goodneſs and rectitude of his mind ſuggeſting to him, that it was a kind of fraud to ſeek encouragement of a paſſion, the deſign of which he was not himſelf able to anſwer for, he remained a few moments in ſuſpence.

This ſilence increaſed Henrietta's embarraſſment, but ſuddenly reflecting upon the advantage it gave Mr. Melvil over her, ſhe turned her eyes towards him, with a look, in which ſhe endeavoured to throw as much indifference as poſſible, but which, nevertheleſs, had an unuſual coldneſs in it; ſo that Melvil, partly with held by his extreme delicacy, and partly by the awe which this ſevere glance inſpired him with, dropped, for that time, all thoughts of declaring his paſſion, and immediately entered into an indifferent converſation.

Henrietta ſeemed as if relieved from a painful load; her countenance reſumed its former ſweetneſs, and ſhe talked to him with her uſual vivacity; yet Miſs Belmour, at her return, ſaw ſome remains of her late uneaſineſs in her eyes: ſhe obſerved too, that ſhe ſpoke leſs to Mr. Melvil, and more to his friend than ſhe did before; that ſhe ſtudiouſly avoided the looks of the former; and

that her behaviour to him was leſs free and obliging than it uſed to be. All this ſhe looked upon as the play of coquetry; and in Mr. Melvil's apparent melancholy ſhe ſaw its purpoſe and effect.

But Henrietta taught, by what paſſed in her own heart during the few moments ſhe was alone with Mr. Melvil, that ſhe not only conſidered him as a lover, but a lover formidable by his engaging qualities, reſolved not to ſtrengthen her prepoſſeſſion in his favour, by continuing to ſee and converſe with him. Lord B——'s behaviour had given her no high idea of the diſintereſtedneſs of men. She trembled at her own imprudence, in ſo far forgetting the humble ſtation that Providence had placed her in, as to entertain ſentiments of tenderneſs for a man, who, from the inequality there was between them, might think himſelf authoriſed to form expectations injurious to her honour: though her weakneſs was ſo lately known to herſelf, yet ſhe fancied it had been perceived by others before, and that even Mr. Melvil had diſcovered the preference with which ſhe regarded him. It was this thought which made her ſo ſuddenly alter her behaviour; but as indifference is, of all diſpoſitions of the mind, the hardeſt to feign, Melvil imputed the apparent conſtraint in her manner to ſome diſguſt he had unhappily given her, and Miſs Belmour to the artifice of a coquet.

Henrietta, who was far from imagining ſhe overacted her part, continued, during the whole time they were at dinner, to avoid her lover's looks, ſo carefully that he had no opportunity to make her comprehend by them, how much he was concerned at her extraordinary coldneſs. However, ſhe could not, without affectation, refuſe him her hand when they left the inn; but they followed Mr. Freeman and Miſs Belmour ſo cloſe, that it was not poſſible for him to ſpeak to her without being over-heard; and he in vain ſought her eyes: they were always directed another way. He ſighed when he helped her into the chaiſe; and if ſhe had not turned her face from him that moment, the bluſh with which it was

overſpread, would have ſhewn him that ſhe took but too much notice of that ſigh.

'You are melancholy, Henrietta,' ſaid Miſs Belmour, after looking at her in ſilence for a long time, attentive to the motions of her mind, which might be eaſily read in her countenance.'

'Am I, Madam?' replied ſhe, with a ſigh half ſuppreſſed, and a gentle ſmile.

'Yes, indeed, are you,' reſumed Miſs Belmour, mimicking the languid accent in which ſhe ſpoke; 'and I don't remember that I ever ſaw you ſo before.'

'And yet I have many cauſes for melancholy, Madam,' replied Henrietta, whoſe heart was full, and ſhe eagerly graſped at this opportunity to relieve herſelf by tears; tears, which ſhe ſuppoſed ſhe gave to the remembrance of her misfortunes, without aſking herſelf why that remembrance was more poignant now than before.

'Ah! Henrietta,' ſaid Miſs Belmour, ſhaking her head, 'your heart has undergone a great change within theſe few days—You are in love, my dear.' 'Is it poſſible, Madam,' cried Henrietta, haſtily, her face all crimſoned over, 'that you have diſcovered?——Do you think that—Then, to be ſure, Mr. Melvil.—She ſtopped abruptly, and caſt down her eyes: the mention of that name ſeemed to lead her to a conſciouſneſs, that ſhe had betrayed herſelf.

Miſs Belmour was affected with her beautiful ſimplicity. 'Don't be aſhamed, my dear Henrietta,' ſaid ſhe, taking her hand, 'to ſpeak freely to me. From me,' added ſhe, ſighing, 'you may be ſure of indulgence.'

'No, Madam, no,' interrupted Henrietta, with great earneſtneſs, 'I would not ſeek indulgence for my weakneſſes: but I conjure you, Madam,' purſued ſhe, with tears that in ſpite of her endeavours would force their way, 'ſuffer me to return to that humble ſtation, from which your partial kindneſs raiſed me—You have made me forget I was a ſervant.—It does not become me to view with ſenſibility the merit of perſons ſo greatly above

me. But you ſhall find, Madam, that I will repair this error, and that my conduct ſhall be ſuch as may render me not unworthy your eſteem.'

Notwithſtading the delicate turn which Henrietta gave to a declaration, which ſhewed ſhe was determined early to conquer her paſſion, yet Miſs Belmour conſidered it as a triumph over her, who had not been capable of acting with equal prudence.

'It is happy for you,' ſaid ſhe, coldly, 'that you need no aſſiſtance to help you to keep your paſſions in ſubjection; but I owe you too many obligations for the good counſel you have given me, to permit you to appear in any other character than that of my friend.'

Henrietta's mind was in ſo much agitation, that ſhe did not take in the full ſenſe of this anſwer, but ſtruck with the obliging purport of the laſt words of it, ſhe expreſſed her gratitude in terms full of tenderneſs and reſpect.

The ſight of Paris drew them both out of a long ſilence, which had ſucceeded a converſation with which neither had been pleaſed: Henrietta, becauſe it had diſcovered ſo much weakneſs on her ſide; Miſs Belmour, becauſe it had ſhewn ſo little.

Their chaiſe, as Miſs Belmour had directed, ſtopped at the houſe of her banker in Paris. The two gentlemen were already at the ſide of it: Mr. Melvil, as if he was afraid Henrietta would refuſe him her hand, ſeized it with trembling haſte; and, as he led her into the houſe, ventured to preſs it with his lips, unperceived by any one elſe. Henrietta, imputing this boldneſs to the diſcovery he had made of her ſentiments, pulled her hand away haſtily, giving him a look at the ſame time that expreſſed her reſentment; but all her anger could not prevent her from being affected with the ſoft languor that appeared in his face, and the ſubmiſſive manner in which he had yielded to the effort ſhe made to withdraw her hand.

Miſs Belmour, at parting, told them, ſhe hoped to ſee them again in a day or two, when ſhe ſhould be ſettled. Her Pariſian friend ſoon procured her convenient lodg-

ings, and, at her desire, recommended to her a Femme de Chambre, among the other servants he provided her, which Henrietta in vain opposed; but fixed in her design to avoid Mr. Melvil, she took care to be seldom in the way when he came.

Miss Belmour blamed her for this conduct. 'You will make the man think you love him, and are afraid of him, said she, by flying him.'

If I loved him, Madam,' replied Henrietta, blushing, 'is it not prudence to avoid him?'

'Why, I don't know,' said Miss Belmour, 'Mr. Melvil certainly loves you; and, whatever inequality there may be in your conditions, yet love is a great leveller: he may possibly intend to marry you.'

'It is not fit I should suppose he has any such design, Madam,' resumed Henrietta, 'since it is highly improbable; and I will not expose myself to the danger of being deceived. I have somewhere read,' added she, smiling, 'that in love flight is victory; and this way at least I shall be sure to conquer.'

Miss Belmour, who knew how difficult it was to be in love and be wise, laughed at a resolution, which she did not think it would be always in her power to maintain. Poor Henrietta, who had so artlesly laid open her heart, was often exposed to the most poignant raillery from her; but at length she was delivered from this kind of persecution, by a surprising alteration in Miss Belmour herself.

This young lady, who had fled from her lover, rather with a hope of stimulating his passion than of subduing her own, though she endeavoured to impose upon herself in believing the latter to be the true motive of her conduct, fell into a most violent despair, when she found that, far from following her, he did not even seek a reconciliation by writing to her. Sick of herself, the world, and tired of her existence, she mistook the agitations of a heart, tortured by jealousy, disappointment, and the pangs of slighted love, for the motions of grace and the genuine marks of repentance. She neglected her dress, took no pleasure in any amusement, avoided company,

and ſpent whole hours in her cloſet, where ſhe wept and prayed by turns.

She told Henrietta, that the world and all its pleaſures were grown inſipid to her; that her whole ſoul was filled with divine love; and that the thoughts and exerciſes of religion made up all her happineſs. She then paſſionately regretted that there were no religious communities among the proteſtants, where a mind that was weaned from this ſublunary world, and all its vanities, might freely indulge its pious contemplations, and devote itſelf entirely to Heaven. 'Oh, how happy are the nuns!' ſhe exclaimed; 'how I envy them! Sure nothing can be more delightful, when perſons are truly pious, than to live in a religious ſociety excluded from all commerce with a world they muſt certainly deſpiſe. I think I ſhould be perfectly happy if I was in a cloiſter.'

Henrietta congratulated her upon her new ſentiments, but endeavoured to prove that there was more merit in paſſing through life with innocence, and in rightly performing all its duties, than in flying to the gloomy ſolitude of a cloiſter, where virtue is ſecured by bolts and bars, and the exerciſes of religion performed as a penance. She recommended to her the ſtudy of the ſcriptures, and put ſome practical treatiſes of religion, written by the beſt authors on that ſubject, into her hands: but the zeal of this new convert was ſo flaming, that nothing would ſerve her but a total retirement from the world; and ſhe made ſuch frequent viſits to a convent, where a friend of her's had lately taken the veil, that Henrietta was apprehenſive the nuns would diſcover the true ſtate of her mind, and take advantage of her paſſions to pervert her principles, and ſecure her to themſelves.

While theſe whims poſſeſſed her, ſhe was ſo inacceſſible to all viſiters, that Mr. Melvil could with difficulty get admittance. Freeman ſaw the progreſs of his paſſion with great uneaſineſs, and, finding that he could not be prevailed upon to leave Paris, reſolved to write to his father, and give him a hint of the dangerous attachment his ſon had formed, that he might ſend him a peremp-

tory command to return to England; but before he could execute this design, Melvil, to his great surprise, told him, that he would leave Paris in two days. The poor youth expected his friend would have expressed some joy at this news; and, being disappointed at his receiving with indifference what had cost him so many pangs to resolve upon,

'You make me no compliments,' said he, with a tender smile, 'upon the conquest I have gained over my inclinations: do you think I can banish myself from Miss Benson without concern?'

'I am sure I cannot hear you speak in this manner without concern,' replied Freeman. Is it fit for a young man of your rank to entertain a serious liking for a woman, to whose birth and character you are an absolute stranger.'

'There is not a man in the world,' resumed Melvil, eagerly, 'who need to blush for loving Miss Benson; her person, beautiful as it is, is the least of her charms; that mingled sweetness and dignity in her manners, that graceful modesty which distinguishes every word and action of her's, exalt her above all the women I have ever seen. You have heard her talk, and you could not help owning that you thought her very sensible.'

'Well, but what is all this to the purpose?' interrupted Freeman; 'what signifies attributing such goddess-like perfections to an obscure girl, whom, if you were at liberty to dispose of yourself, you would not, I suppose, be so mad as to marry: your fortune would enable you to make other proposals, less unworthy of yourself, though advantageous enough for a young woman in her dependent situation.'

'May I perish,' replied Melvil, with some emotion, 'if I would degrade such excellence to a mistress; but if I were capable of such a design, her virtue, I am sure, is incorruptible. Have you not observed with what care she shuns me? She knows I love her, but she knows not with what purity I love her; and, conscious of her situation, she is afraid I should take advantage of it to declare myself in a manner that would wound her delicacy.

—Charming creature, how I love her!—Indeed, my dear Freeman, it is time to be gone.'

'I see it plainly,' replied Freeman, 'you are grown quite romantic.—We will set out to-morrow, if you please; for, with the strange notions you have entertained, I think you ought not to trust yourself here any longer.'

The lover consented with a sigh, but at the same time put his friend in mind, that civility obliged them to go and take leave of the ladies. Freeman could not reasonably oppose his making this visit; and, after he had given proper directions to the servants for their journey the next day, he accompanied him to Miss Belmont's lodgings.

CHAP. III.

In which Miss Belmour acts the Part of a true Female Friend.

THEY found the two ladies together: Henrietta could not, without affectation, avoid her lover that day, as she was in the room when he came in; and he, who had not been so fortunate for several days before, found so much delight in looking at her and hearing her speak, that he forgot he came to pay a farewel visit, which Mr. Freeman observing, took care to mention their design of leaving Paris the next day.

Melvil's gaiety was immediately over-cast, Henrietta turned pale, Freeman was attentive to his friend's emotions, and only Miss Belmour had freedom of mind enough left to speak. She said some civil things upon the occasion, which Freeman answered; for Melvil continued silent, with his eyes fixed upon Henrietta, who had bent her's towards the ground: conscious of the emotion with which she had heard the news of their intended departure, she durst not look up, lest the person, from whom she was most solicitous to hide her concern, should read it too plainly in her countenance.

Recovering herself at length, upon Miss Belmour's taking occasion to thank them anew for the civilities she had received from them during their journey from Calais, she added a few words to her compliment; but,

in doing so, her eyes slightly glanced over Mr. Melvil, and directed their looks full upon his friend.

The conversation was dull enough during two hours that they stayed; and Freeman, perceiving the young gentleman wanted resolution to put an end to the visit, rose up first, Mr. Melvil did so likewise, though with apparent reluctance; and having saluted Miss Belmour, approached Henrietta, trembling. She turned pale and red successively; a soft sigh stole from her. Melvil was in too much emotion to observe her's: he saluted her with an air of solemn respect; but, as she retired a step back, a sudden impulse, which he could not resist, made him take her hand; he pressed it to his lips with passionate tenderness, and, sighing, quitted the room with the utmost precipitation.

Henrietta's eyes overflowed; she made haste to wipe them before Miss Belmour, who attended the gentlemen as far as the door of her anti-chamber, returned.

'Ah! my poor Henrietta,' said that young lady, who perceived she had been weeping, 'I pity you—What sordid wretches are these men! Melvil loves you, and yet he is able to leave you; nay, I am persuaded he has discovered your tenderness for him—What monstrous ingratitude, you ought to hate him, my dear.'

'You bid me hate him, Madam,' replied Henrietta, smiling, 'yet say every thing that can confirm me in a favourable opinion of him. If he loves me, and has seen any weakness in me, he gives the best proof of his love in not seeking to take advantage of that weakness.'

Miss Belmour, who thought this a strange way of reasoning, answered no otherwise than by a significant smile, which seemed to say she was resolved to justify him at any rate; while Henrietta, finding in her lover's behaviour a delicacy which agreeably flattered her esteem of him, cherished his remembrance with a tender grief, and perhaps, for the first time, repined at her unhappy fortune, which had placed such a distance between them.

As soon as the two gentlemen had left their lodgings, Melvil, who found himself very low-spirited, proposed

to his friend to spend the evening at a noted Hotel, with some young Englishmen of fashion, who were newly arrived: Freeman consented; but observed with uneasiness, that his pupil, who till then had been remarkably abstemious, pushed about the bottle with great velocity, and could not be persuaded to go home till the night was far advanced.

Mr. Freeman saw him in bed, and then retired to his own chamber, full of apprehensions lest this sudden intemperance should have any bad effect on his health. As soon as it was light, he went to his bed side, and found him with all the symptoms of a feverish disorder upon him, to which the agitations of his mind had contributed more perhaps than the liquor of which he had drank so freely.

All thoughts of their journey were now laid aside; physicians were sent for, who pronounced that he was dangerously ill: Freeman, full of anxiety, sat close to his bed, holding one of his burning hands tenderly pressed between his. He heard him sigh frequently, and from thence took occasion to ask him, if any secret uneasiness occasioned his indisposition?

The young gentleman attributed his illness entirely to the debauch he had made the night before; but his fever increasing, he grew delirious, and then the name of Miss Benson was continually in his mouth.

Freeman, judging by these ravings of the deep impression this young woman had made on the heart of his pupil, blamed himself for so obstinately opposing his passion, and, judging from Henrietta's situation that she would not refuse to listen to such proposals as his fortune enabled him to make her, he resolved to attempt something in his friend's favour.

His curiosity having led him to make some enquiries concerning Miss Belmour of several persons that had lately arrived from England, he found she had but a doubtful character; her connexions with Mr. Campley having exposed her to great censure: of her companion he could learn nothing; but, concluding from the

friendſhip there appeared to be between them, that ſhe was her confidant in this amour, he flattered himſelf that ſhe would not be a very difficult conqueſt.

He ſhut his eyes upon all that was wrong in this proceeding; and, conſidering nothing but the intereſt of his friend, he thought it leſs dangerous to give him a miſtreſs, than to truſt him to the fantaſtic power of his paſſion, which might hurry him on to a clandeſtine marriage.

The young gentleman was in a few days entirely out of danger from the fever; but his ſighs, and the penſive air of his countenance, ſhewed that his mind was not at eaſe.

'If you were able to go abroad,' ſaid Freeman to him, 'we would viſit our Engliſh ladies once more before we leave Paris. They imagine we are in London by this time, and will be ſtrangely ſurpriſed to ſee us again.'

'Then they do not know I have been ill,' replied Mr. Melvil.

'Not yet,' ſaid Freeman; 'but if you wiſh they ſhould know, I will wait on them this afternoon, and tell them what has kept us in Paris ſo much longer than we intended.'

Melvil affected to receive this propoſal with indifference; but his friend obſerved, that he was more chearful than before, and doubted not but he expected the news of his illneſs would have ſome effect on Henrietta.

He went at the uſual hour, and was immediately admitted: 'you are in Paris ſtill, then!' exclaimed Miſs Belmour, in a joyful accent, as ſoon as Freeman entered her apartment, 'I am exceſſively glad of it, I hope your agreeable friend is with you.'

Freeman, a little diſappointed at not ſeeing Henrietta with her, anſwered coldly, that Mr. Melvil had been indiſpoſed, which obliged them to delay their journey.

'I fancy,' ſaid Miſs Belmour, with an arch leer, 'that the air of Paris is mighty neceſſary for your

friend at this time, you are in the wrong to hurry him away.'

'You have a great deal of penetration, Madam,' replied Mr. Freeman, ſmiling, 'you have gueſſed the cauſe of his illneſs, I believe.'

'I believe I have,' reſumed Miſs Belmour, and perhaps I could tell him ſomething that might contribute to forward his recovery.'

Freeman began now to think his ſcheme was in a hopeful way. 'To be ſincere with you, Madam,' ſaid he, with a graver look and accent, 'Mr. Melvil is deſperately in love with Miſs Benſon.'

'Poor man!' cried Miſs Belmour, laughing, 'he is to be pitied truly, for Miſs Benſon is moſt deſperately in love with him likewiſe.'

'How happy would this news make him!' exclaimed Freeman. 'Am I, Madam, at liberty to tell him?'

'Certainly,' replied Miſs Belmour, 'I told you for that purpoſe; and now what do you think of my frankneſs?'

'I adore you for it, Madam,' ſaid Freeman, taking her hand, which (encouraged by her behaviour) he kiſſed with great liberty. 'Ah!' purſued he, looking at her tenderly, 'what additional charms does kindneſs give to beauty!'

'I hear Miſs Benſon on the ſtairs,' ſaid Miſs Belmour, withdrawing her hand; 'I will give you an opportunity to plead your friend's cauſe: remember what I have told you, and don't be diſcouraged by a little affectation.'

She ſtopped upon Henrietta's entrance, who ſtarted at the ſight of Mr. Freeman, and immediately after her fair face was covered with bluſhes.

'You ſee we have not loſt our good friends yet,' ſaid Miſs Belmour. Henrietta only ſmiled. 'I muſt deſire you, my dear,' purſued that young lady, 'to entertain Mr. Freeman; I ordered ſome trades-people to attend me about this time.'

She hurried out of the room when ſhe had ſaid this,

not without ſome confuſion for the part ſhe had acted; to account for which, it is neceſſary the reader ſhould know that the mind of this young lady had undergone another revolution, within the few days of Mr. Melvil's illneſs.

A letter from her lover, filled with tender complaints, and new aſſurances of everlaſting fidelity, had baniſhed all thoughts of devotion and a convent. She had anſwered it immediately without communicating it to Henrietta; her tranſport at finding herſelf ſtill beloved, and the fear of diſguſting him by any new coldneſs, hurried her on to the moſt fatal reſolutions. She invited him to come to Paris to her; and, not doubting but he would inſtantly obey her ſummons, ſhe was now only ſolicitous how to reconcile Henrietta to her conduct, and oblige her to keep her ſecret.

The unexpected news of Mr. Melvil's being ſtill in Paris, and Mr. Freeman's acknowledgment of his friend's paſſion for Henrietta, anſwered all her views. She imputed the reſerve Henrietta had been enabled to maintain, leſs to her own virtue than to the unenterpriſing temper of her lover; and was perſuaded that the diſcovery ſhe had made of her tenderneſs for him, would put the affair upon ſuch a footing, as to make her leſs rigid in her remonſtrances with reſpect to Mr. Campley.

CHAP. IV.

Which contains a very intereſting Diſcovery.

FREEMAN, though perſuaded that Miſs Belmour was a woman of intrigue, and by conſequence entertaining no elevated idea of her companion, yet found himſelf ſo awed by the modeſty that ſhone in her countenance, and the dignity of her perſon and manner, that he was at ſome loſs how to introduce the ſubject which had brought him thither. Henrietta, however, innocently led him to it, by expreſſing her ſurpriſe to ſee him ſtill in Paris.

'You ſay nothing of my friend, Madam,' ſaid Freeman; 'and this indifference with regard to him is a very bad omen.'

'I hope Mr. Melvil is well,' ſaid Henrietta, gravely,

without ſeeming to take any notice of the ſtrange ſpeech he had made.

'He is better than he was three or four days ago,' replied Freeman, 'when his phyſicians deſpaired of his life.'

'Bleſs me!' cried Henrietta, with an emotion ſhe could not ſuppreſs, 'has Mr. Melvil been ſo ill then? I am extremely concerned to hear it.'

'You would, no doubt,' ſaid Freeman,' be more concerned if you knew you were the cauſe.'

'This kind of raillery, Mr. Freeman,' replied Henrietta, a little confuſed, 'is not at all agreeable to me, I aſſure you.'

'By Heaven I am ſerious,' reſumed Freeman; 'my friend loves you with the utmoſt ardor: I am a witneſs to the birth and progreſs of his paſſion, and to his fruitleſs endeavours to conquer it. The effort he made to leave Paris, has almoſt coſt him his life; he was taken ill the evening before our intended departure. Oh, Miſs Benſon! had you heard with what tenderneſs he called upon your name, when the violence of his fever had deprived him of his ſenſes, I am ſure you muſt have pitied him.'

Freeman perceived by the changes in Henrietta's countenance, that ſhe did not hear him without emotion. He pauſed, in expectation of ſome pretty affected anſwer, that would give hope while it ſeemed to deſtroy it; but Henrietta, with a compoſed look and accent, replied,

'If I am to believe this account of your friend's illneſs not exaggerated, permit me to aſk you, Sir, what is your deſign by making me acquainted with his ſentiments, and what you expect from me upon this occaſion?'

Freeman was a little diſconcerted by this ſpeech, and at the manner in which ſhe delivered it; but, relying on the intelligence he had received from Miſs Belmour,

'I expect you will have compaſſion on my friend,' ſaid he, 'and give him an opportunity to declare to you himſelf the paſſion you have inſpired him with.'

'I will be very free with you, Mr. Freeman,' replied Henrietta; 'your ready concurrence with your friend in the liking you ſay he has entertained for me, is not conſiſtent with your good ſenſe and prudence. Mr. Melvil is a young man of rank and fortune; I am poor and dependent; my birth perhaps greatly inferior to his. Will his parents, think you, approve of ſuch a choice?'

'What have parents to do with a tender engagement?' interrupted Freeman; 'an engagement in which the heart only is conſulted.'

'Were my heart ever ſo well diſpoſed in favour of your friend,' reſumed Henrietta, not willing to underſtand him, 'I would not receive his addreſſes without the ſanction of his parents' conſent.'

Freeman could hardly help ſmiling at this formal declaration; and, ſuppoſing that the beſt way to drive theſe ſtrange notions out of her head, was to acquaint her with Melvil's quality, which he likewiſe expected would have no ſmall influence over her.

'It is not fit, ſaid he, that you ſhould be any longer ignorant of the rank of him whom your charms have ſubjected. Melvil is not the name of my friend; he is the heir of an illuſtrious title and a great eſtate: he loves you, he will make your fortune; do not throw away this opportunity of freeing yourſelf from poverty and dependance, nor let a romantic notion of virtue deprive you of the advantages that are offered you.'

'Hold, Sir,' interrupted Henrietta, riſing from her chair, 'this inſult is too plain; I ought not to have liſtened to you ſo long.' She ſpoke this with tolerable compoſure; but, finding her tears begin to flow, ſhe turned aſide to conceal them, and haſtily wiping her eyes, ſhe looked on him again with a kind of calm diſdain.

'I know not, ſaid ſhe, what weakneſs you have diſcovered in my behaviour to encourage you to make me ſuch ſhocking propoſals; but I may venture to tell you, though I am not the miſtreſs of this apartment, that the doors of it ſhall never be open to you again.'

She was hurrying out of the room when she had spoke this, leaving Freeman in so much confusion, that he knew not what to say to her, when Miss Belmour entered with a letter in her hand.

'Do you know a gentleman of the name of Bale,' said she to Henrietta, 'who is at present at Montpelier?'

'I do, Madam,' replied she, looking eagerly at the letter.

'Then this letter is for you, I suppose,' said Miss Belmour, 'it was inclosed in another to me, and directed to my banker's: but is your name Courteney? you see the superscription is for Miss Courteney.'

'The letter is certainly for me, Madam,' said Henrietta, blushing.

'Oh! then,' replied Miss Belmour, smiling, and giving it to her, 'I have discovered a secret, I find.'

Henrietta retired immediately; and Miss Belmour approached Mr. Freeman, who stood leaning over his chair, with his eyes fixed on the ground,

'What is the matter with you?' said she, 'you look excessively pale.'

'Where is Miss Benson, Madam?' said he, starting out of his revery, at the sound of her voice.

'She is in her own chamber, I believe,' replied Miss Belmour; 'but did you take notice of what passed about the letter, I delivered it to her before you on purpose: you see she in a manner owned that Courteney is her true name; is not this strange?'

'I must beg leave to speak to her again,' said he, interrupting her, and making towards the door, 'which way, pray Madam?'

Miss Belmour followed him, surprised at the agitation he appeared to be in: and, pointing to a room just opposite, 'you will find her there,' said she.

Freeman opened the door without any ceremony; Henrietta, who was reading her letter, looked up at the noise he made in entering: 'this is extremely rude, Sir,' said she; 'I desire you will instantly be gone, and trouble me no more.' But, apprehensive that he

would not quit her ſo eaſily, ſhe ruſhed by him, and was running to the room in which ſhe had left Miſs Belmour: he took hold of her hand, to prevent her leaving him; and ſhe was upon the point of expreſſing her reſentment at the inſolence of this treatment, in harſher terms than any ſhe had yet uſed, when ſhe ſaw tears guſh in great abundance from his eyes. Moved at this ſight, ſhe ſtood ſtill, but endeavoured to diſengage her hand, looking at him earneſtly, and in the utmoſt aſtoniſhment.

'O my ſiſter!' cried he at laſt, burſting into a freſh flood of tears; 'my dear, dear ſiſter'—He was not able to utter a word more, but led her gently back to her chamber, which ſhe permitted, trembling, confuſed, and full of anxious expectation.

'How ſtrangely you look upon me!' ſaid he, 'do you doubt whether I am your brother?'

'I know not what to think,' replied ſhe, ſhrinking from his embrace; for he had folded his arms about her.

'Dear girl!' cried he, 'how amiable is this ſweet reſerve—theſe modeſt doubts——but it is certain I am your brother, my Henrietta: is it poſſible your memory retains no traces of my features? in your's, methinks I ſee a lively reſemblance of my dear mother. How dull was I that I did not diſcover it before! but how could I expect to meet you in France, in ſuch a ſituation, and under a diſguiſed name! Oh! my dear ſiſter, theſe circumſtances diſtract me.—Good Heaven! what a part have I acted.—I perceive you are ſtill perplexed,' purſued he, after a little pauſe; and, taking a miniature picture out of his pocket, 'You will certainly be able to recollect your mother's picture,' ſaid he, 'which ſhe gave me at parting.'

Henrietta looked at the picture, kiſſed it, and then threw herſelf in tears upon her brother's neck.—'Forgive my doubts,' ſaid ſhe, 'it is many years ſince I have ſeen you, we were children when we parted, but now I am convinced you are my brother: my heart tells me ſo without this dear teſtimony,' purſued ſhe, kiſſing again the picture of her mother, which ſhe ſtill held; then ſud-

denly clasping her hands together, and lifting up her fine eyes, which were swimming in tears, 'I thank thee, O my God!' said she, 'for restoring to me my brother:' and, turning again to him with an affectionate look, 'a few moments ago,' said she, 'I thought myself very unhappy, but now you will be a friend and protector to me.'

He tenderly kissed her cheek—'What a wretch have I been!' said he, sighing—'Indeed, my dear sister, I never shall forgive myself for having ignorantly practised on your virtue.'

'Oh! that my brother,' replied Henrietta, 'would be taught by this accident never more to form designs against innocence; and, in cases like mine, to consider every virtuous young woman as a sister.'

Mr. Courteney, for so we shall now call him, was extremely moved at these words. He gazed at her some moments with mingled tenderness and delight; but all on a sudden, as if struck with some painful reflection,

'Henrietta,' said he, with a look and accent greatly altered from his former sweetness, 'why came you to France? and how has it happened that you are so intimately connected with this woman, this Miss Belmour?'

'Why, do you know any harm of Miss Belmour?' said Henrietta, frighted at his sternness.

'You don't answer my question,' replied he, peevishly.

'Alas! my dear brother,' said Henrietta, 'I have a long and melancholy story to tell you: I have been reduced to great distress; my aunt, with whom you supposed me so happily settled, has treated me unkindly: I must confess, indeed, I have not been wholly free from blame; but you shall know all some other time. As for Miss Belmour, I was recommended to her—I would not shock you, brother; but I have been obliged to go to service, and I was recommended to Miss Belmour by two ladies of quality, her near relations.'

Mr. Courteney sighed deeply at this account, and remained for several moments silent; at length recovering himself,

'Miſs Belmour, it ſeems,' ſaid he, 'did not always know your real name—You appear to be on the footing of a companion.'

'Miſs Belmour was pleaſed to take a liking to me,' ſaid Henrietta; 'and, though ignorant of my birth, would not ſuffer me to continue with her in the character of a ſervant.—I have been greatly obliged to her.'

'Yes, you are obliged to her,' interrupted Mr. Courteney, kindling into rage at the remembrance of what had paſſed between them; 'infamous wretch! ſhe has done her part towards betraying you to ruin. You have been very imprudent, Henrietta: you have talked to her of Mr. Melvil too freely: ſhe believes you are in love with him, and told me ſo, to encourage my attempts upon you.'

Henrietta bluſhed at the mention of Mr. Melvil, and preſently after burſt into tears at this diſcovery of Miſs Belmour's baſeneſs and ingratitude, but uttered not a word of complaint or reſentment.

'I will not ſuffer you to remain any longer with her,' reſumed Mr. Courteney; 'I will go directly and provide you lodgings in the houſe of a worthy Engliſh family: I ſuppoſe you can have no objection to this propoſal.'

'Why do you look and ſpeak ſo coldly, my dear brother?' ſaid Henrietta: 'to be ſure I can have no objection; diſpoſe of me as you pleaſe, you are in the place of my father, I will obey you as ſuch.'

'Forgive me, my dear,' ſaid he, tenderly preſſing her hand, 'my temper is warm; I have ſpoke to you harſhly: indeed I am greatly alarmed at the diſagreeable circumſtances I find you in, you have been to blame, you own. Alas! my dear ſiſter, what have you done to be thus abandoned by your aunt. I ſhall be on the rack till I have heard all your ſtory; but this is not a proper place.—Take a civil leave of Miſs Belmour, but do not acquaint her that you have diſcovered your brother, for I know not yet what meaſures I ſhall take; I will call for you in leſs than an hour in a coach.'

Henrietta promifed to be ready; he took a tender leave of her, and departed.

CHAP. V.

The Hiftory continued.

OUR fair heroine continued fome time alone in her chamber, fo tranfported at this unexpected meeting with her brother, that fhe fometimes doubted whether her happinefs was real, and whether all that had paft was not an illufion of her fancy. When her fpirits were a little compofed, fhe began to confider what reafon fhe fhould give Mifs Belmour for quitting her fo fuddenly: fhe rightly judged that the fecrecy her brother had recommended to her, proceeded from his embarraffment with regard to Mr. Melvil; and fhe refolved, however ftrange her going away might appear to Mifs Belmour, to follow his directions punctually.

The treachery this young lady had been guilty of towards her, excited lefs refentment than grief for the conviction it brought her, that her principles were not changed. Several circumftances now rufhed upon her memory, which ferved to convince her fhe was relapfing into her former indifcretions; and fhe doubted not but Mifs Belmour would be rejoiced to be delivered from her prefence. This thought gave her courage to go to her immediately, and acquaint her with her intention.

'A ftrange alteration has happened in my affairs, Madam,' faid fhe, entering her apartment, 'within this hour.'

'That letter has brought you fome good news, I fuppofe,' faid Mifs Belmour, coldly.

'It came from a dear and worthy friend, Madam,' replied Henrietta; and I have indeed heard fome good news, which I little expected: but I am obliged to leave you, and fo fuddenly, that I am afraid you will think me ungrateful for your kindnefs, in fubmitting to this neceffity.'

'Pray make no apologies,' interrupted Mifs Belmour, with great indifference, 'you are entirely at your own liberty.'

Henrietta, who thought fhe had reafon for this be-

viour, was ſtudying for ſome anſwer, which, without revealing the ſecret motive of her conduct, might tend in ſome meaſure to excuſe it; when a ſervant introduced a gentleman into the room, who, though ſhe had ſeen but once, ſhe knew immediately to be Mr. Campley. She turned eagerly to obſerve how Miſs Belmour was affected by this viſit; and diſcovering no ſigns of ſurpriſe or anger in her countenance, but an exceſs of joy and ſatisfaction, ſhe concluded this meeting was concerted, ſhe retired immediately, in great concern, to her own room.

Here, while ſhe waited her brother's return, ſhe employed herſelf in writing to Miſs Belmour. In this letter ſhe repeated what ſhe had often heard before, to guard her againſt the baſe deſigns of her lover: ſhe recalled to her remembrance the reſolution ſhe had made, and the vows with which ſhe had ſealed it, never more to liſten to his deſtructive addreſſes; and conjured her, by every motive of religion, honour, and virtue, to baniſh from her ſight a man whoſe only aim was to ruin her.

She had ſcarce finiſhed her letter, when a ſervant came to tell her, that ſome company waited for her in a coach. She made haſte to ſeal it, and gave it to Miſs Belmour's maid, with orders to deliver it to her lady. At the door ſhe found her brother, who helped her into the coach, and came in after her. He aſked her, ſmiling, how ſhe had parted with Miſs Belmour?

Henrietta told him, ſhe had left her with company. 'It is indifferent to me what company ſhe ſees now you are not with her,' ſaid he: 'but my heart will not be at reſt till I hear all your ſtory, ſiſter.'

Henrietta promiſed to ſatisfy him when they were arrived at her new lodgings. 'I am alſo impatient,' ſaid ſhe, 'to know your adventures; why you called yourſelf Freeman, and what was the cauſe of your not writing to me for ſo many months paſt.'

'To ſay the truth, my dear ſiſter,' ſaid he, 'I have been guilty of a little neglect in not writing to you oftener: however, ſome of my letters muſt have certainly have miſcarried; for I wrote to you both from

Bruſſels and Genoa, and I don't remember I had any anſwer. The account you gave me of Mr. Bale's kindneſs in taking upon him the office of your guardian, and your happy ſettlement with lady Meadows, made me perfectly eaſy with regard to you. I had informed you that I was appointed governor to the marquis of ——: this young nobleman had contracted a friendſhip with me during his ſtay at Leyden, where his governor dying, he wrote to his father the duke of ——, in ſuch preſſing terms in my favour, which, joined to the knowledge of my birth, and very high recommendations from the univerſity, had ſo much weight with him, that his grace, notwithſtanding my youth, appointed me governor to his ſon, with a ſalary of five hundred pounds a year. I have endeavoured to acquit myſelf faithfully of this truſt; my pupil and I have always lived together like brothers; and I flatter myſelf his father will have no cauſe to repent his having conſigned him to my care.'

'But why did you take the names of Melvil and Freeman?' interrupted Henrietta.

'The marquis,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'had an inclination to travel without the parade of quality, that he might, as he wrote to his father, make nearer and more uſeful obſervations upon men and manners; and, being indulged in this ſcheme, we have travelled through France and Italy under thoſe names, and with a very ſmall equipage. And now, Henrietta, that you know the quality of my friend, I expect you will not entertain any ridiculous hopes from the liking he has expreſſed for you. I will do him the juſtice to own that he never formed any diſhonourable deſigns upon you. The character of the woman you lived with, encouraged me to make you ſome ſhocking propoſals. You behaved very properly; but, my dear ſiſter, no words can expreſs my anguiſh and confuſion, when I heard you own the name of Courteney, and your connections with Mr. Bale.—Good Heaven! what did I not ſuffer at that moment—What a wretch did I ſeem in my own eyes!'

'Let not this cruel remembrance diſturb you now, my dear brother,' ſaid Henrietta; 'I am ſo happy in finding you, that I forget all my paſt uneaſineſſes.'

Her looks bore delightful witneſs to the truth of what ſhe ſaid. Joy ſparkled in her charming eyes, heightened the roſy bloom of her complection, and animated her whole air: but, dearly as ſhe loved her brother, the aſſurance he gave her, that her lover had no part in the diſhonourable propoſals he had made her, was a circumſtance that greatly increaſed her ſatisfaction in this meeting.

Mr. Courteney looked at her with admiration and delight, while a tender ſenſe of the misfortunes ſhe had been expoſed to, almoſt melted him into tears. As ſoon as the coach ſtopped, he told her, that the maſter of the houſe they were going into was a very worthy man, with whom he was intimately acquainted, and whoſe prudence he could depend upon. 'His wife,' purſued he, 'is a virtuous, ſenſible woman: I know no family ſo proper to place you in as this; and it was extremely lucky that I thought of them upon this occaſion, for it was not fit you ſhould ſtay with Miſs Belmour, and in ſo ſhort a time it was difficult to diſpoſe of you properly.'

As ſoon as they alighted, Mrs. Knight came to receive Henrietta, and preſented her huſband to her. Both ſeemed greatly charmed with her appearance, and politely thanked Mr. Courteney for bringing them ſo agreeable a gueſt.

After a few compliments they withdrew, ſuppoſing the brother and ſiſter would be glad of an opportunity to converſe together in private. Mr. Courteney immediately drew his chair near his ſiſter's, and, with a look of impatience, demanded the account ſhe had promiſed him.

Henrietta bluſhed, and begged him not to judge her errors too ſeverely. She then gave him a candid relation of all that had happened to her, from her mother's death till the time ſhe met him at the inn, concealing

nothing from him but Miſs Belmour's paſſion for Mr. Campley.

Mr. Courteney was variouſly affected during the courſe of her little ſtory. He often changed countenance, but would not interrupt her. He obſerved with pleaſure, that ſhe laid no ſtreſs upon any part of her conduct, which might with juſtice challenge eſteem and admiration, but appeared nicely conſcious of every little imprudence: and, when ſhe had ended, waited for his reply, with an anxiety that ſhewed ſhe rather expected cenſure than praiſe.

'My dear Henrietta,' ſaid Mr. Courteney, at length, with tears in his eyes, 'you have acted nobly; you cannot imagine how much your ſufferings endear you to me, ſince you have behaved under them with ſuch becoming fortitude.'

'How happy you make me,' cried Henrietta, 'by your approbation.—Indeed I was afraid you would have chidden me ſeverely for leaving my aunt in the manner I did.'

'It was a raſh ſtep,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'but your ſubſequent conduct has effaced it; and I ſee not how you could have otherwiſe avoided being in the power of that villain prieſt.'

After ſome farther converſation on different parts of her ſtory, he looked at his watch: 'how faſt the minutes fly!' ſaid he, ſmiling. 'My dear Henrietta, I muſt leave you now, yet I have a thouſand things to ſay to you: but I will ſee you to morrow morning. You will be very happy,' continued he, 'with Mrs. Knight, and I ſhall have no ſcruple to truſt you to her care, till I have conducted the marquis to London: we ſhall go in a day or two; and, after I have delivered my charge ſafe to his father, I will come back to Paris, and fetch you.'

Henrietta turned pale at theſe words: 'then we are to part again ſoon!' ſaid ſhe, in a melancholy accent.

'It would be highly improper for you, 'replied he,

'to take this journey with us, on ſeveral accounts: I ſhall be concerned to leave you, but it muſt be ſo.'

'Could you not ſtay till Mr. Bale comes?' interrupted Henrietta; and, taking his letter out of her pocket, 'ſee here how affectionately he writes to me,' added ſhe; 'he propoſes to be in Paris in three weeks, and inſiſts upon my going to England with him.'

Mr. Courteney read the letter with great pleaſure. Mr. Bale addreſſed her in it by the tender name of daughter; and aſſured her, that he would in every reſpect act like a father towards her. He praiſed her conduct in terms of the higheſt admiration, and begged her not to be uneaſy at her aunt's deſertion of her; ſince it was in his power to make her eaſy, and he was reſolved to do ſo.

'This letter,' ſaid Mr. Courteney, after a pauſe, 'will make ſome little alteration in my plan: I had reſolved not to take any notice to the marquis, that I had diſcovered you to be my ſiſter, but to make ſome excuſe for your diſappearing; however, I ſee it will be neceſſary to wait for Mr. Bale. I congratulate you, my dear Henrietta, on the friendſhip of ſo worthy a man.'

'But will you ſtay till he comes to Paris?' interrupted the tender, anxious Henrietta.

'May I depend upon your prudence, ſiſter?' ſaid Mr. Courteney. 'It is poſſible the marquis may talk to you of love: if you give him the leaſt encouragement, you will forfeit my eſteem for ever; it ſhall never be ſaid, that I took advantage of his youth to draw him into a marriage with my ſiſter.'

'Oh! do not ſuſpect me of ſuch meanneſs,' ſaid Henrietta, bluſhing: 'if the Marquis was a thouſand times more amiable than he is, and were I ever ſo much prejudiced in his favour, I have too juſt a ſenſe of what I owe to my birth, to your honour, and my own, to admit of a clandeſtine addreſs.—You may be entirely eaſy upon this article.'

'I am ſatisfied,' replied Mr. Courteney, tenderly preſſing her hand; 'and now, my dear Henrietta, adieu for this evening.'

'Don't fail to come to-morrow,' said she, following him to the door. He smiled assentingly; and having taken leave of Mrs. Knight, who met him as he was going in search of her, he hurried home to his pupil, by whom he was expected with extreme impatience.

CHAP. VI.

Farther Continuation of the History.

THE Marquis, as soon as he entered his chamber, perceived that something extraordinary had happened to him.

'Sure,' said he, smiling, 'you have met with some strange adventure, Freeman; you look pleased, and yet there is a thoughtful air in your countenance.'

'I have had an adventure indeed,' replied Mr. Courteney (entering abruptly into an affair which could not be concealed from him) 'I have met with my sister here in Paris.'

'Your sister!' repeated the marquis; 'you did not expect her, did you?

'No, faith,' replied Mr. Courteney; 'nor did I know her when I saw her.'

'That is not surprising,' said the marquis; 'she was very young when you parted, I have heard you say: I hope you will allow me to pay my respects to her; but (added he, impatiently) how does Miss Belmour and her fair friend?'

'Her fair friend, as you are pleased to call her,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'is my sister, whom for so many weeks I have seen almost every day without knowing her.'

'Is it possible! (cried the marquis, surprised) Miss Benson your sister! Sure you are not in earnest.'

'Indeed I am,' said Mr. Courteney, 'I discovered her by the oddest accident: Miss Belmour herself did not know who she was; but while I was there, she brought her a letter, which had been inclosed to her; it was directed for Miss Courteney, and came from Mr. Bale, my sister's guardian: she owned the name, and by that means I found out my sister. I see you are asto-

nished,' added Mr. Courteney, ' poor Henrietta has told me all her story; the repetition would be tedious, but——'

' How can you think so?' interrupted the marquis, eagerly: ' can you doubt that I am extremely interested in every thing that concerns you.'

' Excuse me, my dear marquis,' said Mr. Courteney, ' I really cannot enter into particulars just now—Fortune still persecutes my dear father in his children. I thought my sister was happily settled with her aunt, lady Meadows, who has no child, and adopted her; but the old lady, being a rigid Roman catholic, pressed her very much to change her religion, and was at last so strangely influenced by an artful priest, who is her chaplain, that she had formed a design to send my sister under the conduct of this fellow, to be shut up in a nunnery. The poor girl, who was, as I can collect by her account, extremely apprehensive of being so entirely in the power of this sly priest, had no way to avoid this misfortune, but by leaving her aunt privately, who absolutely refused to be reconciled to her on any other condition than her changing her religion. Thus deserted, her guardian being abroad, and having nothing to expect from her relations, she chose to go to service, and was recommended to Miss Belmour by the countess of ——, her kinswoman.'

' What a wretch must your uncle be!' said the marquis, with tears in his eyes, ' to permit such excellence —' He stopped a moment; then suddenly grasping his hand, ' O my dear Freeman,' pursued he, ' you have it in your power to make me happy.—You know how ardently I love your charming sister—'

' This I was apprehensive of,' interrupted Mr. Courteney. ' I beg, my lord, that you will banish these thoughts.'

' What!' cried the marquis hastily: ' have you any objection to my passion for your sister?'

' Indeed I have, a very strong one,' replied Mr. Courteney, ' and that is the certainty of the duke your father's disapprobation of it.'

'It is poſſible, indeed,' ſaid the marquis, after a little pauſe, 'that in the choice of a wife for me, my father will be influenced by the ſame motives that moſt fathers are: he will expect a large fortune with the perſon I marry; therefore, my dear Charles, you ſee the neceſſity there is for not conſulting him in this caſe.'

'Sure you forget, my lord,' interrupted Mr. Courteney, coolly, 'what you once declared, that you would never enter into an engagement of this kind, contrary to the duke's inclinations.'

'I remember I ſaid ſo,' replied the marquis; 'and were I to make a choice which he could reaſonably object to, certainly it would be wrong, very wrong to diſobey him: but if the want of a fortune can make a father diſapprove of my affection for a young lady of Miſs Courteney's birth and merit, muſt I be governed by ſuch ſordid motives?'

The marquis went on to prove, by a great many arguments common enough on ſuch occaſions, that in the articles of marriage, a parent had no right to lay any reſtraint upon the inclinations of his child. Mr. Courteney did not think proper to enter into a diſpute with him upon this ſubject: the patience with which he liſtened to him, made the young nobleman conclude he was not unwilling to come into his meaſures.

'My dear Charles,' added he, after a ſhort pauſe, 'will you not be my advocate with your charming ſiſter? I die with impatience to throw myſelf at her feet, and offer her my heart and my hand.'

'You cannot doubt, my lord,' ſaid Mr. Courteney, 'but that I think my ſiſter highly honoured by the eſteem you expreſs for her; but ſhe would be very unworthy of it, if ſhe was capable of admitting your addreſſes, either unknown to your father, or in oppoſition to his will. I may venture to anſwer for her, that ſhe will not, by ſo unjuſtifiable a conduct, expoſe her brother to cenſure: and it gives me great concern to find you are no better acquainted with my ſentiments, than to imagine I will ſo baſely betray the truſt the duke has repoſed in me, and be acceſſary to your diſpoſing of your-

self in a manner which I am very sure he will not approve.'

'Then I am to expect nothing from your friendship on this occasion, Mr. Courteney!' replied the marquis, with an air of displeasure: 'you are determined to raise difficulties to my design, instead of removing them; is this acting like a man whom I have loved like a brother, and whom it would be my highest happiness to call so.'

'To call you brother with your father's consent, my lord,' said Mr. Courteney, 'is an honour I cannot hope for, and which without it I do not wish.'

'As noble and disinterested as you imagine this conduct to be,' said the marquis, rising, 'it will have another name perhaps with persons less romantic in their notions than you are. However, Sir, you are no more than the brother of Miss Courteney: if I am happy enough to prevail with her to receive my addresses, I shall not think your consent necessary.' He passed by him with a cool bow, as he pronounced these words, and retired to his own chamber.

CHAP. VII.

In which we are afraid some of our Readers will think Mr. Courteney acts a very silly part.

MR. Courteney saw plainly, that by refusing to comply with his pupil's desires, he should entirely lose his friendship, but in a case where his honour was so greatly concerned, this consideration had no weight with him: and although he had a high opinion of his sister's candour and integrity, yet the intimation Miss Belmour had given him of her regard for Mr. Melvil, made him apprehensive that she might be prevailed upon to listen to the vows of the marquis of ——. He resolved therefore to keep the place of her abode a secret, (for he knew he could depend upon the prudence of Mr. Knight and his wife); and to use his utmost endeavours to hasten the young lord's departure from France.

The marquis, mean time, was forming very different designs. It is so rare a thing for a man in love to be either reasonable or just, on occasions where the interest of his passion is concerned, that it is not surprising

the marquis ſhould impute his governor's conduct with regard to his ſiſter to peeviſhneſs and caprice, and think himſelf extremely ill uſed by his not acccepting his offers. He conceived Miſs Courteney to be equally injured by the oppoſition her brother made to the advancement of her fortune; and flattering himſelf that, if his perſon was not diſagreeable to her, he ſhould ſoon overcome any ſcruples Mr. Courteney might have ſuggeſted on account of the duke his father's diſapprobation, he determined to conſult him no further in the affair, but to addreſs himſelf directly to her.

He ſpent part of the night in writing a letter to her, in which he declared his paſſion in the moſt tender and reſpectful terms, and begged ſhe would allow him to wait upon her. The remaining hours were not ſpent in ſleep, but in impatient longings for the morning, which was to confirm or deſtroy his hopes. As ſoon as it was light, he roſe and walked about his room. He read over the letter he had written; he thought it but poorly expreſſed the ardor of his love: he ſat down and wrote another, which he liked ſtill leſs, and had recourſe again to the firſt, after adding a poſtſcript, in which he earneſtly repeated his requeſt to be indulged with a few moments private diſcourſe with her.

He ſealed up his letter, and directed it for Miſs Courteney. Her brother had not mentioned to him his having removed her from Miſs Belmour: he ſuppoſed ſhe was ſtill with her; but a doubt occurring to him, whether ſhe was willing to aſſume her real name yet, he thought it beſt to put it in another cover, ſuperſcribed for Miſs Benſon.

It was ſtill too early to ſend to a lady's lodgings; he counted the hours with anxious impatience, and at length rung his bell for his ſervant. As ſoon as he appeared, he gave him the letter, recommending ſecrecy, and charging him not to return without an anſwer.

The valet, when he came back, brought him word that Miſs Benſon was gone; and this was all the intelligence he could get. Miſs Belmour's woman indeed had added with a ſneer, that ſhe went off with Mr.

Freeman, and it was ſtrange that his friend Mr. Melvil ſhould not know where ſhe was. This part of the meſſage the fellow prudently ſuppreſſed; for he judged the buſineſs to be an amour, and that the young gentlemen were rivals, and he was afraid of making miſchief.

The marquis, however, eaſily gueſſed that this ſudden removal of Miſs Courteney was her brother's act: he diſmiſſed his ſervant; and beginning now to be ſenſible how much it was in his governor's power to traverſe his deſigns, and how obſtinately he was bent upon doing ſo, he reſigned himſelf up to the moſt violent tranſports of rage; and, during a few moments, all his thoughts ran upon revenge.

Mr. Courteney came into his chamber while he was under theſe agitations; and, ſeeing him walking about with a furious pace, 'For Heaven's ſake, my lord,' ſaid he, 'what is the matter with you?'

The marquis turned ſhort upon him, and, with a voice broken with paſſion, exclaimed, 'May I periſh, Courteney, if I forgive you.'

Mr. Courteney, who ſuppoſed this reſentment was the conſequence of their converſation the night before, replied calmly, 'You are angry, my lord—This is no time to talk.'

He was going out of the room, but the marquis, haſtily ſtepping between him and the door, ſhut it with great violence.

'If it is not your time to talk, Sir, it is mine,' ſaid he.

'Very well, my lord,' replied Mr. Courteney, with a compoſed look and accent, 'I am ready to hear you.'

The young nobleman continued to walk in a ſullen ſilence, as if reſolved to be angry, and knew not well what cauſe to aſſign for it; when ſuddenly ſtopping,

'I inſiſt upon your telling me, Sir,' ſaid he, 'why you have ſecreted your ſiſter? Do you ſuſpect I have diſhonourable deſigns upon her?'

'Diſhonourable deſigns upon my ſiſter!' repeated Mr. Courteney, kindling at the expreſſion: 'my lord, no

man, while I have life, ſhall incur ſuch a ſuſpicion with impunity.'

'This ſpirit becomes one of your birth,' replied the marquis; 'but let me tell you, Mr. Courteney, your conduct is not altogether conſiſtent; why muſt your ſiſter be hurried, nobody knows whither, and concealed with ſuch wonderful caution?'

'Are you ſure this is the caſe, my lord?' ſaid Mr. Courteney.

'Yes, very ſure,' anſwered the marquis, haſtily.

'Since it was not I who gave your lordſhip this information,' reſumed Mr. Courteney, 'you muſt have taken ſome trouble to come to the knowledge of it; and the motive that ſet you upon theſe enquiries ſufficiently juſtifies my caution with regard to my ſiſter.'

'Then I am not worthy, it ſeems, to pay my addreſſes to your ſiſter,' ſaid the marquis, peeviſhly.

'Indeed, my lord, this is a very childiſh ſpeech,' replied Mr. Courteney; 'you know your addreſſes would do honour to any woman: but the depreſſed ſtate of my ſiſter's fortune leaves her no right to expect a man of your quality for a huſband; and ſhe has too juſt a pride to ſubmit to make a clandeſtine marriage; nor will I be branded with the imputation of having ſeduced my pupil into a marriage with my ſiſter.'

'What have you to do with the affair at all?' replied the marquis, eagerly: 'leave Miſs Courteney to act as ſhe thinks proper; you need not make yourſelf anſwerable for my conduct on this occaſion, I loved her before I knew her to be your ſiſter; cannot your romantic honour ſatisfy itſelf with being paſſive in this buſineſs?'

'I ſhould but ill perform my engagements to your father, my lord,' interrupted Mr. Courteney, 'if I did not uſe my utmoſt endeavours to prevent you from diſpleaſing him in a matter of ſo great importance as your marriage.'

'How are you ſure my father will be diſpleaſed?' ſaid the marquis: 'Miſs Courteney's merit will juſtify my choice.'

'Put it upon that issue,' replied Mr. Courteney; 'ask his consent.'

'Well, Sir, I will ask his consent,' resumed the marquis; 'and now am I at liberty to visit your sister?'

'If you intend, my lord, to be governed by the duke's advice,' said Mr. Courteney, 'you will certainly be contented to wait his answer; and you cannot suppose, that knowing your sentiments so well as I do, I will permit my sister to receive your visits while we are ignorant of the duke's intentions.'

The marquis lost all patience at this unreasonable obstinacy, as he conceived it. 'I renounce your friendship from this moment,' said he, 'for ever; and, had you not a sister, I would resent this behaviour in another manner.'

He flung out of the room when he had said this; and, shutting himself up in his study, gave his valet orders to allow no body to disturb him.

Mr. Courteney was not so much offended at the harshness of his language, as to hinder him from feeling great concern for the uneasy state of his mind; and, notwithstanding his own temper was vehement enough, yet he was able to make some allowances for the transports of a young man, who saw himself so resolutely opposed in a point he had set his heart upon: but despairing to pacify his pupil without entering into his design, he determined to place his sister effectually out of his reach; and then, if he could not prevail upon him to return to England, nothing remained but to make the duke his father acquainted with the whole affair.

He waited some time in expectation that the marquis would come down to breakfast as usual; but, finding that he had ordered his chocolate to be brought to him in his study, he went to visit his sister, as he had promised.

The marquis heard him, as he passed by his door, call for his hat and sword; and, his valet entering a moment afterwards with the chocolate, he asked him, if Mr. Freeman was gone out? Being answered that he

was

was, it suddenly came into his head, that he was going [illegible].

'Follow him instantly,' said he to the fellow, 'and bring me word to what place he goes, and here is something to purchase your secrecy and diligence.'

The sight of two louis d'ors, which the marquis gave him, left the valet no inclination to be discreet any longer. He went out of the room with officious haste, fully determined to execute his commission with the utmost exactness. When he got into the street, he perceived Mr. Courteney walking leisurely on: he followed him at a distance, took particular notice of the house he entered; and, after waiting a few moments to see whether he came out again, he went back to the marquis with his intelligence.

The young lover did not doubt but he had discovered his mistress's abode; and in the joy this thought gave him, he bestowed many praises on his valet's ingenuity, together with a reward of two louis d'ors more, which he liked still better. He then ordered him to give directions for his chariot to be got ready, while he assisted him to dress. His looks discovered such an excess of satisfaction, that the valet, under no apprehensions that what he had done would produce any disagreeable consequences, entered with vast delight upon his new post of confidant to his master. The marquis ordered him to stay at home till Mr. Freeman came in, and then immediately to come to him at the hotel de ——.

CHAP. [illegible]

In which Mr. Courteney [illegible] of his Folly.

WHILE Henrietta was innocently sowing the seeds of discord between the two friends, she herself enjoyed a perfect composure of mind, and indulged the most pleasing reflections on the happy change of her fortune.

She was no longer in the humiliating condition of a servant; or, what to her was still more mortifying, a dependant upon the bounty of another, an unknown wanderer, without friends or protectors. She was now under the care of a brother, whom she tenderly loved, whose

merit could not fail of diſtinguiſhing him, and of forcing that reſpect and conſideration due to a noble birth, and which he, though in a depreſſed fortune, ſo nobly ſupported.

She was aſſured that her guardian was not only free from any unfavourable prejudices on account of her aunt's deſertion of her, but that ſhe might expect all the tender offices of a parent from him; and, what afforded the nice ſenſibility of her ſoul a more delicate ſatisfaction than all this, the only man in the world whom ſhe was capable of regarding, with a preference to the reſt of his ſex; though, in ſo elevated a rank, had loved her in indigence and obſcurity with honour, and juſtified the tender ſentiments ſhe entertained for him.

Her ſmiles, when ſhe ſaw her brother appear, and the gaiety of her behaviour, convinced him, her mind was at eaſe; but his features ſtill retained that impreſſion of chagrin he had ſo lately felt from the marquis's cauſeleſs rage; and there was a ſolemnity in his manner, that, in an inſtant, changed the innocent chearfulneſs of Henrietta into anxiety and concern.

The preſence of Mrs. Knight was a reſtraint upon them both. She perceived it; and, as ſoon as the tea-table was removed, (for the ladies were at breakfaſt when Mr. Courteney came in) ſhe retired and left them at liberty.

The moment ſhe was gone, Henrietta eagerly aſked him, if any thing had happened to give him uneaſineſs ſince ſhe ſaw him?

'Yes,' replied he abruptly, 'the marquis and I have quarrelled.'

'Quarrelled!' repeated Henrietta, trembling and pale as death, 'have you quarrelled?'

Mr. Courteney, who obſerved her emotion, continued to look at her ſo earneſtly, that ſhe bluſhed and caſt down her eyes. 'You ſeem greatly affected with this accident,' ſaid he at laſt; 'I wiſh I had not mentioned it to you.'

'Could you ſuppoſe,' ſaid Henrietta, in an accent which had at leaſt as much of grief as tenderneſs in it,

'that I could hear with indifference what must necessarily be very afflicting to you?'

'Your indifference perhaps, on this occasion,' said Mr. Courteney, 'would be more welcome to me than the concern I see you under.'

Henrietta, having pondered a little on the meaning of these words, replied in a firmer tone, 'place some confidence in me, brother, you will find I shall deserve it.'

'My dear Henrietta,' resumed Mr. Courteney, affected with the manner in which she spoke, and her expressive look, 'you ought to forgive my doubts, when you reflect on what Miss Belmour told me; the merit of my noble pupil has made an impression on your heart; but your marriage with him, sister, will bring everlasting infamy upon me.'

'Have I not already declared my resolution to you upon this head?' replied Henrietta.

'The marquis loves you,' resumed Mr. Courteney: 'he is rash and inconsiderate; he has no hope (and indeed it would be strange if he had) that the duke his father will consent to such an unequal match; yet he presses me to introduce him to you as a lover, and to favour his designs of marrying you privately. You may easily imagine what answer I gave him; the consequence is, that he has declared himself my enemy. We are upon very bad terms. But this is not my greatest concern: the marquis, if he can get access to you, will teaze you with solicitations; and, disposed as you are in his favor, have I not cause to apprehend you will listen to him but too readily?'

'Although I should confirm your suspicions,' said Henrietta, with tears in her eyes, 'yet I must again repeat I am grieved at this difference between your pupil and you. Nay, I will own,' pursued she, avoiding with a sweet bashfulness the earnest looks of her brother, 'that I am not insensible of this young nobleman's affection for me; but, after this candid confession, you ought to believe me, when I assure you, that I will enter into no engagement with him without your approbation; and to

make you eafy, I will comply with any meafures you think proper, to avoid his purfuits.'

' I fee I may rely upon you,' faid Mr. Courteney, charmed with her amiable franknefs; ' but, my dear Henrietta, I hope you will not allow this prepoffeffion to take too deep root in your heart: fure your good fenfe, and the delicacy of your fentiments, will hinder you from giving way to a hopelefs paffion.'

' I beg you not to talk to me on this fubject,' interrupted Henrietta, tears, in fpite of her endeavours to reftrain them, flowing faft down her face; ' only tell me what you would have me do to avoid the marquis; have you formed any plan? Doubt not of my readinefs to comply with it.'

' Have you any objections to boarding in a convent till Mr. Bale comes?' faid Mr. Courteney.

' No,' replied Henrietta, half fmiling, ' for I cannot fufpect you have a defign upon my religion, as my aunt had, and mean to confine me all my life.'

' No, really,' refumed Mr. Courteney, fmiling likewife; ' but it will be more difficult for the marquis to get accefs to you in a convent than here; and as it is probable enough that this affair will make fome noife, it will be more for your reputation to have it known that you lived in fuch a refpectable fociety, where there were fo many witneffes of your conduct, and fuch exact regularity required, than in private lodgings, where you were accountable to no body for your actions.'

' Then you intend to leave me before Mr. Bale comes?' faid Henrietta, fighing.

' To be fure,' replied Mr. Courteney, ' I will force the marquis away if poffible; and if I find all my remonftrances ineffectual, the duke muft interpofe his authority.'

' You intend to wri[illegible]o him then?' faid Henrietta.

' Certainly,' replied [illegible], ' don't you think I ought to do fo, fifter?'

' Indeed I do,' anfwered fhe.

' I am glad of it,' refumed Mr. Courteney, ' yet this procedure will embroil me more with the marquis; but

I see no help for it, unless Mr. Bale should happen to come sooner than we expect, and take you with him to England. I hope to prevail upon my pupil to leave Paris in two or three days; and if I have not the satisfaction to leave you under Mr. Bale's care, a convent is the fittest place for you to retire to."

Henrietta, having reflected on her brother's proposal, found it so reasonable, and so much to the advantage of her reputation, that she readily yielded to put it in immediate execution.

Mrs. Knight being desired to return, Mr. Courteney told her their design, and requested her assistance. She expressed some concern at being so soon to lose her agreeable guest, but undertook to transact the affair; and it was resolved that she should go that day and procure the young lady to be admitted as a pensioner in the Augustine nunnery of English ladies in Paris.

Mr. Courteney, having promised his sister to come and conduct her to the convent the next day, took leave of her, highly satisfied with her docility, and returned home. He was surprised to hear that the marquis was gone abroad; but having no suspicion of his intention to visit Henrietta, whose abode he concluded was still a secret to him, he was only concerned lest his health should suffer, by venturing out before it was fully re-established.

The marquis's valet no sooner saw Mr. Courteney return, than he ran immediately to acquaint his master, who set forwards, with a beating heart, to visit his mistress. The valet had given so exact a direction, that the coachman had no difficulty to find the house. The marquis alighted the moment the door was opened, and asking the servant for Miss Courteney, was instantly introduced into a parlour, where Henrietta was sitting alone, Mrs. Knight having just left her to go and execute her commission.

The sight of the marquis threw her into the utmost confusion. She rose, however, and received him with great respect: he approached her bowing, and made her

a genteel compliment upon her happy meeting with her brother.

Henrietta would not ſuffer this ſubject to be dwelt upon long, leſt it ſhould lead to circumſtances too intereſting. She changed the converſation to indifferent matters, and took care that it ſhould not flag a moment; ſo that the marquis, partly embarraſſed by that awe which always accompanies a ſincere paſſion, and partly by the prudent management of Henrietta, found he had protracted his viſit to a conſiderable length, without drawing any advantage from it.

Alarmed at the thoughts of loſing an opportunity, which the rigid and inflexible temper of his governor might prevent him from meeting with again, he ſuddenly aſſumed courage to make her a declaration of his paſſion, but in terms the moſt tender and reſpectful, and with an explicitneſs that became one of his rank and fortune, to uſe towards a young lady in her delicate circumſtances, whom he would not for a moment leave in doubt of the ſincerity of his profeſſions, and his firm reſolution to adhere to them.

Henrietta liſtened to him with a graceful modeſty; and when he earneſtly preſſed for her anſwer, ſhe aſſured him, that ſhe was very ſenſible of the honour he did her, and ſhould always think herſelf obliged to him for having entertained ſuch favourable ſentiments of her, as could make him overlook the inequality there was between them. As for the reſt, ſhe referred him to her brother, who, ſhe ſaid, was in the place of a father to her, and by whoſe advice and direction ſhe was determined to be governed entirely.

The marquis would have had no reaſon to be diſſatisfied with this anſwer, if he had not known that he had nothing to expect from an application to her brother, and the apprehenſion that ſhe alſo knew it, and therefore took this method to free herſelf from his importunities, gave him ſo much concern, that he turned pale, and ſighing, fixed his eyes upon the ground. His air, his attitude, his looks, were all ſo moving, ſo expreſſive of tenderneſs, anxiety, and grief, that Henrietta durſt not truſt

herſelf to behold him, leſt he ſhould turn his eyes towards her, and diſcover in her's the too great intereſt ſhe took in his uneaſineſs.

Some moments paſſed in an affecting ſilence on both ſides, during which the marquis remained immoveably fixed in the ſame penſive poſture, till rouzed by the opening of the door, and the appearance of Mr. Courteney. Henrietta's face was in an inſtant covered with bluſhes: the marquis ſeemed greatly embarraſſed. Mr. Courteney ſhewed ſome ſurpriſe at firſt; but, recovering himſelf, he ſpoke to his pupil with an eaſy air, and relieved both him and his ſiſter from their confuſion, by entering immediately into an indifferent converſation.

The marquis drew a favourable omen from this behaviour: his looks reſumed their uſual ſweetneſs and vivacity; and, during a whole hour that they continued together, nothing could be more ſpirited and lively than the diſcourſe between three perſons, who had the moſt perfect tenderneſs for one another, yet, from their ſeveral circumſtances, were obliged mutually to oppoſe and give pain.

The marquis at length, with apparent reluctance, put an end to his viſit, as did Mr. Courteney likewiſe, though he was very deſirous of talking to his ſiſter in private. When they were in the chariot together, the young lord was ſeveral times upon the point of preſſing his governor again upon the ſubject of his love, as he ſeemed to be leſs inclined than formerly to oppoſe him; but he was reſtrained from entering into any explanation, by his apprehenſion of deſtroying thoſe hopes he had ſo lately began to entertain, and of rendering his acceſs to Henrietta more difficult for the future. Mr. Courteney alſo had his reaſons for preventing any ſuch explanation, and induſtriouſly amuſed him with other diſcourſe.

The marquis could not help thinking it ſtrange that he took no notice of the viſit he had made his ſiſter: but as love is ever ready to flatter its own wiſhes, he began to imagine that Mr. Courteney had relaxed in the ſeverity of his reſolutions, but knew not yet how to yield with a good grace; he favoured his embarraſſment therefore

for the present, and they passed the remaining part of the day in their usual company and diversions.

When they came home at night, the marquis desired to have an hour's conversation with him; but Mr. Courteney, complaining of a sudden head-ach, excused himself, and retired to his own chamber.

The next morning, before his pupil was up, he repaired to Mrs. Knight's. She told him, that every thing was agreed on for the reception of the young lady; and he had the satisfaction to find his sister making preparations for her removal, without any appearance of discontent. She acquainted him with what had passed in the conversation between the marquis and her.

'I have no doubt of his affection for you,' said Mr. Courteney; 'we must leave the event of it to Providence, and act so as that whatever happens, we may not incur censure.'

As soon as breakfast was over, Henrietta, accompanied by Mrs. Knight and her brother, went in a coach to the convent, where she was very civilly received by the prioress. Mr. Courteney promised to visit her soon, and took leave of her, to wait upon Mrs. Knight home; after which he returned to the marquis, who had enquired for him several times.

CHAP. IX.

In which the Reader, it is presumed, can make no Discoveries concerning the Event of this History.

THE marquis, when he saw him enter his chamber, approached him with an obliging air, and affectionately pressing his hand,

'May I hope, my dear Courteney,' said he, 'that you have overcome your fantastic scruples, and that you will favour my pretensions to your charming sister. I will make you no apology for stealing a visit to her; you would, I am sure, have done the same in my situation. Indeed, Charles, you must either resolve to give me Miss Courteney, or to see me miserable. She referred me to you; my happiness depends upon a single word of your's: can you be so cruel to refuse me this instance of your friendship?'

'You know, my lord,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'that there is not any thing you can desire of me, consistent with my honour, which I would refuse; but, unless I would make myself infamous, I cannot yield to your marrying my sister without the duke's consent. Hear what I have to propose,' continued he, perceiving him to be in a violent emotion; 'let us return to England immediately. You have often told me, that the duke is a most tender father; you are an only child: it is possible he may be prevailed upon to yield to your desires, if you tell him you cannot be happy without my sister. Let us make the trial at least.'

'I agree to it,' interrupted the marquis, eagerly, 'provided you will promise me, that if my father is so unreasonable as to refuse his consent, you will no longer oppose my marriage. I am of age; it is fit, that in a matter of such importance to the future happiness of my whole life, I should be at liberty to follow my inclinations. Speak, Charles, will you make me this promise?'

'Indeed, I will not, my lord,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'you must not expect it.'

'Detested obstinacy!' cried the marquis, flinging his hand away, which he had held till this moment; 'what a wretch am I to have my happiness depend upon the will of a capricious man, who mistakes his romantic whims for honour! But observe what I say, Courteney,' added he, turning hastily towards him, 'you shall not hinder me from visiting your sister; nothing but her absolute commands shall prevent my seeing her.'

'My sister,' said Mr. Courteney, 'will stay no longer in France, than till Mr. B[illegible]e (to whose care her mother left her at her death) returns from Montpelier: he is to conduct her to England; and she is gone to board in a convent till his arrival.'

'Gone to a convent!' repeated the marquis; 'this is your scheme, I suppose.'

'I hoped to prevail upon you,' said Mr. Courteney, 'since you are quite recovered, to leave Paris immedi-

ately; and I thought a convent the propereſt place for my ſiſter to reſide in till her guardian comes.'

The marquis inſtantly running over in his thoughts the uſe that might be made of this intelligence, replied, that he had no inclination to leave Paris yet; and broke off all farther converſation by quitting the room.

In effect, he had reſolved to make an application to Mr. Bale, ſuppoſing, that ſince he had not the ſame foundation for ſcruples as his governor, he would readily liſten to an offer ſo advantageous for his ward.

Mr. Courteney penetrated into his views, and doubtful how Mr. Bale would act, and whether his ſiſter, having the ſanction of his approbation, might not give way to the motions of her own heart, and encourage the addreſſes of the marquis; he concluded it neceſſary to make the duke acquainted with the whole affair, that he might take ſuch meaſures as he judged proper to reſtrain his ſon from an action which might incur his diſpleaſure.

He wrote accordingly that day, and having thus diſcharged his duty, his mind was more at eaſe.

The marquis, full of hope that his new ſcheme would be ſucceſsful, made no effort to ſee Henrietta, for fear of raiſing ſuſpicions in her brother: but the coldneſs and reſerve with which he treated him, ſufficiently ſhewed how much he reſented his conduct.

Henrietta was ſoon reconciled to a retirement in which ſhe had full liberty to indulge her reflections; for ſhe was in love enough to find more ſatisfaction in being alone, than in the ſweeteſt and moſt agreeable ſociety. Her brother did not fail to viſit her every day: he found her ſatisfied with her ſituation; and, in appearance, no otherwiſe affected with his approaching departure, which he gave her [illegible], than what her tenderneſs for him m[illegible] of.

In the mean time the duke of ——, having received Mr. Courteney's letter, was greatly pleaſed with the nobleneſs and generoſity of his behaviour. He wrote to him immediately, in terms of the higheſt friendſhip and regard; and, acquainting him with the purport of his letter to his ſon, recommended it to him to haſten his

departure, assuring him he had the firmest reliance upon his integrity and honour.

The packet, to avoid suspicion, had been directed as usual to the marquis, who was not surprised to find a letter in it for Mr. Courteney, to whom his father was accustomed to write often: he sent it to him immediately; and, after reading his own, he went to Mr. Courteney's chamber, holding it still in his hand.

'My father writes to me,' said he, 'to leave Paris as soon as possible. He does not expressly say that he is ill; but, from some hints in his letter, I can collect that this is the cause of his extreme earnestness to see me. You cannot imagine how much I am affected with this accident,' pursued he, sighing. 'I love my father: I did not know how much I loved him, till I feared his loss. I am determined to set out to-morrow from Paris; but I must see your sister first, Courteney, nor ought you to refuse me the satisfaction of telling her, that I depart with a firm resolution never to be but her's.'

'Well, my lord,' replied Mr. Courteney, after a little pause, 'we will go together, and take leave of my sister.'

'I was to blame,' said the marquis, 'to expect any indulgence from you: we will go together then, since it must be so.' He retired again to his own apartment to write to his father; and in the mean time Mr. Courteney gave the necessary orders for their journey the next morning.

Henrietta had been prepared by a billet from her brother, for the visit that was intended her. The news of their departure had cost her some tears; but when she was informed they waited for her in the parlour of the convent, she appeared before them with all that soft composure and dignity of manners, which never forsook her in the most trying situations.

Mr. Courteney watched the turn of her countenance when the marquis accosted her, and was pleased to see it equally free from embarrassment and affectation; and that, notwithstanding all the expressive language of her

lover's eyes, she had so much command over herself, as to seem the least interested person in company.

Politeness obliged the marquis to shorten his visit, that the brother and sister might be at liberty to take a private leave of each other. He rose from his seat, and approached Henrietta, with an air that left her no room to doubt of his intention to say something particular to her; and now, for the first time, her looks betrayed some little confusion.

'I cannot go away, Madam,' said he, 'without renewing the declaration I made you some days ago; and I take this opportunity to assure you, before your brother, who knows the sincerity of my heart, that my sentiments for you will ever be the same: and, if you do not forbid it, I will carry away with me the dear hope of being able one day to merit your esteem.'

Henrietta courtesied in silence; but her blushes, and the soft confusion she was in, seemed no unfavourable omen for the marquis: he bowed respectfully, and retired.

Mr. Courteney, affecting not to perceive his sister's concern, entered immediately after his pupils departure into other discourse. He recommended it to her to improve her guardian's esteem for her, and assured her he would visit lady Meadows, and use his endeavours to remove her prejudices, and restore her to the place she formerly held in her affection: at her desire likewise he promised to call upon Mrs. Willis, to whom she had been so greatly obliged. He charged her to keep up no sort of intimacy with Miss Belmour, though she should seek it, but permitted her, in company with Mr. Bale, to pay her a farewel visit; and, indeed, the conduct of that young lady, since the arrival of Mr. Campley, justified these precautions.

Henrietta promised to follow all his directions. He said a thousand affectionate things to her; and then, desiring to see the prioress, he tenderly recommended his sister to her care, took a short leave, and went home; while Henrietta retired to her chamber to weep

The marquis was not visible till the next morning,

when he was informed that the post-chaise was at the door. His extreme melancholy during the whole journey, gave his governor great concern: but he in vain attempted to amuse him; for though the marquis behaved to him with all imaginable respect, yet he was so cold and reserved, that he found it impossible to renew his former freedom with him.

The duke of —— had informed them, that he should be at his country-seat; and, immediately upon their landing in England, they repaired thither: the duke received his son with the most tender transports, and his governor with every mark of esteem and regard.

The morning after their arrival, he sent for Mr. Courteney into his closet, and thanked him in very affectionate terms for having so faithfully and honourably discharged his trust. He politely avoided mentioning the affair of the young lord's passion for his sister, because she was his sister; but said enough to convince him, that he had the most grateful sense of his disinterested conduct upon that occasion. He settled on him, during his life, the sum he had allowed him while he travelled with the marquis; and offered him, in the most cordial manner, all his interest towards procuring him an establishment suitable to his birth.

Mr. Courteney received these instances of the duke's friendship for him with respect and gratitude; but he was more touched with the old nobleman's delicacy with regard to his sister, than with all the favours conferred on himself.

The interest of this sister, whom he loved with the most tender affection, made him hasten his departure from the duke's seat, that he might wait on his aunt, who he had heard was in London. The duke embraced him tenderly at parting, and obliged him to promise that he would return as soon as possible. The marquis lost all his reserve and coldness, when he took leave of his governor, his friend, and, what was more than all, the brother of his adored Henrietta.

'You have used me unkindly,' said he, in a low

voice; yet pressing him tenderly to his breast, 'but I shall always love you.'

Mr. Courteney let fall some tears, but made no answer; and immediately after mounting his horse, he set out for London, attended by his own servant, and one of the duke's, whom his grace had ordered to escort him.

CHAP. X.

Which leaves the Reader still in doubt.

MR. Courteney, when he came within a short distance of London, dismissed the duke's servant, with compliments to his grace and the marquis, and proceeded on his journey. It came into his head to alight at the house of Mrs. Willis, from whom it was possible he might receive some intelligence that would be of use to him. The good woman received him with great civility; but when he told her his name, she was in transports, and enquired for her beloved Miss Courteney with the tender anxiety of a mother.

Mr. Courteney told her, that his sister would soon be in London with her guardian. He took occasion to thank her for her friendly care of her, which Henrietta had mentioned with the utmost gratitude; and assured her, he should always consider himself as highly obliged to her.

'How largely do I share in my dear Miss Courteney's joy,' said she, 'for so happy a meeting with her beloved brother! Heaven will, I doubt not, shower its blessings on her; for sure if ever mortal deserved them, she does. O! Sir, your sister is an angelic creature—'

Mrs. Willis, indulging the tender effusions of her heart, continued to expatiate on Henrietta's virtues, till Mr. Courteney, though not displeased to hear her, interrupted her, to ask some questions concerning his aunt.

'I was going to write to Miss Courteney to-day, Sir,' replied she, 'for I have great news to acquaint her with; that vile priest, who was the cause of all her uneasiness, has at length shewn himself in his true colours. The sanctified hypocrite was detected in an amour with lady Meadows's woman: this affair has opened her eyes;

she thinks her niece has been greatly injured by the misrepresentations of this wretch, whom she has discarded with infamy; and the first proof she has given of her favourable disposition towards Miss Courteney, was her taking again her former woman, whom she had dismissed on account of her attachment to the young lady. I had this intelligence from Mrs. White herself; for so your aunt's woman, Sir, is called. She says she does not doubt but her lady will write to Miss Courteney in the most tender manner, and invite her home again."

This news gave Mr. Courteney great satisfaction: he resolved not to delay a moment visiting his aunt; his portmantua had been carried into a chamber, by Mrs. Willis's directions, and thither he retired to dress. As soon as he was ready, he got into a hackney-coach, and fraught with a thousand kind wishes from this faithful friend of his sister, he proceeded to the house of lady Meadows.

He was so lucky as to find her at home, and sent in his name without any hesitation. The old lady, in a violent flutter of spirits, advanced as far as the door of her apartment to meet her nephew. His graceful form and polite address prejudiced her instantly in his favour; and she received him with all the tenderness he could have wished, and with much more than he expected.

Her first enquiries were for Henrietta. Mr. Courteney was pleased with this solicitude; but he observed that, during the course of their conversation, her attention with regard to his sister, decreased considerably. He praised her with all the modesty, yet with all the affection of a brother.

Lady Meadows, who had heard a very advantageous account of her niece from the countess, her good friend, assured him that she knew his sister's merit, and had restored her to that tenderness and esteem, which some little errors of her's, and some unjust suspicions of her own, which had been artfully infused into her, had robbed her of. She expressed great satisfaction at hear-

ing of her guardian's kindneſs: but her words, 'I hope he will do ſomething for her,' gave Mr. Courteney great concern; who, from the firſt moment that he had heard Henrietta was likely to recover her favour, had formed a ſcheme to make her and the marquis happy.

Lady Meadows perceived that he was affected with that expreſſion, ſhe therefore added that his ſiſter might depend upon a welcome reception from her, whenever ſhe returned to England.

Though there was nothing to object to the words of this declaration, yet there was a great deal to the manner of it. In the coldneſs with which ſhe made it, he ſaw the diſappointment of his hopes. In reality, lady Meadows had begun to entertain a prodigious fondneſs for her nephew; and Henrietta had now but the ſecond place in her affection. The longer ſhe converſed with him, the more this fondneſs increaſed. Women are ever readier to diſcover merit in the other ſex than in their own. Henrietta had as many amiable qualities as her brother; but lady Meadows was not ſo ſenſible of them: and Mr. Courteney made as great a progreſs in her affections in three hours, as his ſiſter had done in as many months.

When he roſe up to take his leave, ſhe declared, with ſome vehemence, that he muſt have no other home than her houſe. 'You have an aunt,' added ſhe, ſmiling, 'though you have no uncle, nor any other relations.' Mr. Courteney reddened with indignation at the mention of his unworthy uncle; but, recovering himſelf, he made her ſuitable acknowledgments for her kindneſs, and, at her deſire, immediately diſpatched a meſſenger to Mrs. Willis, to acquaint her that he ſhould not return, and at the ſame time ſent orders to his ſervant to bring his portmantua.

Lady Meadows having given directions for an apartment to be prepared for Mr. Courteney, they paſſed the evening together with great ſatisfaction, particularly on the part of the old lady, who thought herſelf extremely happy in having ſo accompliſhed a youth for her nephew. All her thoughts ran upon the pleaſure ſhe ſhould

have in shewing him to her friends and acquaintance, and of piquing his unnatural uncle, by openly professing her regard for him.

More than a week after his arrival was spent in a continual succession of visits, to all which he attended her; and so absolutely had he won her heart in that time, that she determined on nothing less than the making him her sole heir. Mr. Courteney, who was desirous of improving the favour he was in to his sister's advantage, took all opportunities to revive his aunt's affection for her; so that to please him, she expressed an impatience to see her. He received letters from her, and from the duke of ——, the same day. Henrietta informed him, that she had heard from Mr. Bale, and that she expected him in Paris in a few days: that the affairs he had to settle there, would detain him but a short time; after which they were to set out immediately for England. She added, that the marquis had wrote to her, and gave him a brief recapitulation of his letter, which seemed to be dictated by the most ardent affection, and the strictest principles of honour.

The duke's letter contained only an earnest request to see him as soon as possible. Lady Meadows was very unwilling to part with him, though he assured her, he would return in two or three days. He spent part of the night in answering his sister's letter, and set out the next morning in a post-chaise for the duke's seat: he reached it in the evening at supper time.

He found only the duke and his son at table; in the countenance of the latter, he observed a profound melancholy, which sensibly affected him. The duke received him with great kindness. The marquis spoke little, but seemed pleased to see him. The next morning the duke sent for Mr. Courteney into his closet.

'What shall I do with my son?' said he to him abruptly, as soon as he entered, 'you see the way he is in; he will certainly break my heart. I made him a very advantageous proposal three days ago: he tells me positively his heart is engaged; yet he knows I am very

desirous the match I mentioned to him should take place. This is such an instance of obstinacy and disobedience, as I know not how to pardon. Little did I imagine that his return, which I so passionately wished for, would be productive of so much uneasiness to me.'

The duke paused here, and looked earnestly at Mr. Courteney, who, not knowing what it was he expected from him, or to what aim his words were directed, continued silent, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

'I see you are concerned,' resumed the duke, 'for the trouble this unlucky affair gives me.'

'Indeed I am, my lord, most sincerely,' replied Mr. Courteney.

'Then I may depend upon your readiness to assist me in removing it,' said his grace; 'hear what I have to propose.—Your sister, allowing for the warmth of an admirer's imagination, appears to me, by my son's account of her, to have a great deal of merit: such a young lady cannot be without pretenders to her heart. It would give me great pleasure to contribute to her establishment: if you have a match in view for her, let me know if I can forward it, either by my purse or my interest. I candidly confess to you, that meer generosity is not my motive for making you this offer: my son's passion is strengthened by hope: when your sister is married, I may find it less difficult to prevail upon him to yield me the obedience I require, and which I have a right to expect.—You do not answer me, Mr. Courteney,' added his grace, after a little pause, 'is there any thing disagreeable in this proposal?'

'Thus pressed, my lord,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'it becomes me to speak with plainness and sincerity.—I have no power over my sister's inclinations, and no consideration whatever should oblige me to hurry her into a marriage, which her own choice did not direct her to. Besides, I am not without suspicions, that the merit of the marquis has made some impression on her heart; and though she has sacrificed it to her honour and duty, yet it will for some time, no doubt, render her deaf to any offer that could be made her. I am very certain, my

lord, that ſhe will never encourage the addreſſes of the marquis without your grace's conſent; but were ſhe capable of acting differently from my hopes and expectations, my honour is concerned to prevent it: and I moſt ſolemnly aſſure your grace, that my ſiſter ſhall never be the wife of the marquis without your expreſs approbation.'

The duke could not help being pleaſed with the candor and ſpirit of this reply. 'We muſt leave this affair then as we found it,' ſaid he: 'I am ſo well convinced of your integrity and honour, that I rely upon you entirely to prevent any conſequences that may be diſagreeable to me.'

The duke that moment perceiving his ſon croſſing the terrace oppoſite to his window, deſired Mr. Courteney to join him. 'You have ſtill great influence over the marquis,' ſaid he, 'try what your perſuaſions can do to make him alter his behaviour; this obſtinacy of his both afflicts and offends me.'

Mr. Courteney bowed, and quitted the duke's cloſet immediately. The marquis, when he ſaw him coming towards him, ſtopped to wait for him.

'You have been cloſeted with my father,' ſaid he to him, ſmiling, 'may I know the ſubject of your converſation?'

'I dare engage your lordſhip gueſſes,' replied Mr. Courteney, ſmiling likewiſe.

'I believe I do,' ſaid the marquis, 'the duke has been complaining of me for my diſobedience, has he not?'

'His grace tells me he has made you a propoſal, my lord, which you have rejected,' anſwered Mr. Courteney, 'and he is under great concern about it.'

'Well, I am ſorry for his uneaſineſs,' interrupted the marquis: 'but there is no help for it.'

'Ah, my lord,' ſaid Mr. Courteney, 'have I not cauſe to be very uneaſy alſo? I who know your motive for diſobliging the duke, in a point he ſeems to have ſo much at heart?'

'You are miſtaken,' reſumed the marquis, 'I ſhould

act as I do, though I had never seen Miss Courteney. But tell me, my dear Charles, have you heard from your sister?'

'I have, my lord,' replied he.

'She is well, I hope,' resumed the marquis, sighing.

'She says nothing to the contrary,' answered Mr. Courteney; 'but I find your lordship has wrote to her.'

'Then she mentions me in her letter?' cried the marquis, eagerly: 'I did indeed write to her, but she would not favour me with an answer. But, dear Charles,' continued he, 'have you not Miss Courteney's letter about you? let me see that part where I am mentioned. Shew me only my name, written by her dear hand, you know not what pleasure it will give me to see it.'

'Upon my honour I have not her letter here,' said Mr. Courteney. 'Why, why, my lord,' pursued he, in great concern, 'will you indulge this fatal passion for my sister? you must by this time be convinced that it can produce nothing but uneasiness to the duke, yourself, to me, and even to her.'

'To her!' repeated the marquis. 'Oh! Charles, your sister is wrapped up in indifference and reserve; she has not the least sensibility for what I suffer upon her account.'

'You are too generous, my lord,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'to wish my sister should encourage any sentiments for you but those of respect and esteem. It would be presumption in her to hope for the duke's approbation of your passion; and were she too sensible of it, she must be unhappy.

'It is enough for me to be unhappy,' resumed the marquis, sighing; 'unhappy in the avarice of my father, to whom I have laid open my whole heart. The want of a fortune is all the objection he has to Miss Courteney; for he appeared charmed with her character, and her birth he knows. Unhappy too, in a rigid friend, who sacrifices me to the fantastic notions he has formed of honour. O! Charles, little did I imagine once that

you would have contributed all in your power to make me miserable.'

'Indeed, my lord,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'this reflection is cruel: this very moment all my thoughts are employed on the means to make you happy.'

'Now you are again my friend,' interrupted the marquis, embracing him eagerly: 'will you then at last give me your charming sister. All that duty can require I have performed: I have implored my father's consent; he has had the cruelty to refuse it me; and this on a motive so sordid, that I am justifiable in following my inclinations without soliciting him any more.'

'You mistake my intentions, my lord,' interrupted Mr. Courteney: 'no, never expect that I will consent to your marrying my sister without the duke's approbation.'

'What then did you mean,' said the marquis, 'by the hopes you gave me just now?'

'To prevail, if possible, upon the duke to consent to your marriage,' replied Mr. Courteney.

The marquis sighed, and cast down his eyes, as if hopeless that this expedient would succeed; but would not say any thing to divert him from his purpose: yet he thought it strange that he should undertake a task, which, interested as he was, seemed less proper for him than any other person.

Mr. Courteney guessed his thoughts, but would not explain himself any farther. In reality, what the marquis had said of his father's having no other objection to his choice but the want of a fortune, confirmed him in his design of using the favour he was in with lady Meadows to the advantage of his sister; and he was not without expectations of prevailing upon her, by the prospect of so honourable a match for her niece, to do as much for her as she had formerly promised, in case she had married the old baronet.

The marquis, who beheld him earnestly, perceived something was labouring in his mind, and he began to entertain hopes of success, though he knew not on what reasonably to found them. 'I cannot,' said Mr. Courte-

ney, obferving the tender folicitude with which he gazed on him, 'communicate to you the fcheme I have formed to reconcile the duke to your wifhes, for reafons which will be obvious enough hereafter. Only thus much I will fay to fatisfy you, that I think it is highly probable I fhall fucceed; but there is one condition which you muft yield to, and which I tell you plainly is the price I fet upon my endeavours to ferve you in this affair.'

'Name it,' interrupted the marquis, eagerly; 'it muft be a ftrange one indeed, if I do not comply with it.'

'You muft give me a folemn promife, my lord,' refumed Mr. Courteney, 'not to feek my fifter's confent to a clandeftine marriage, if I fhould fail in my endeavours to procure the duke's approbation, and you muft make the fame promife to his grace likewife.—Nay, my lord,' purfued he, obferving that he hefitated, 'you rifk nothing by entering into this engagement, for I am bound by oath, as well as by honour, to prevent my fifter from being your's upon any terms but the duke's exprefs confent; and, depend upon it, you will never gain her's but on the fame condition.'

'Well,' replied the marquis, 'you have my promife, and I will make the fame declaration to my father: it will be time enough to tell him, if your fcheme proves unfuccefsful, my fixed refolution never to marry, if I do not marry Mifs Courteney.'

Mr. Courteney had already gained fo important a point, that he did not think it neceffary to combat this refolution at that time. They walked together into the houfe; and the marquis conceiving that it might be of fome advantage to Mr. Courteney's fchême to take an early opportunity of making the promife he required of him, the duke had that fatisfaction in his next private converfation with his fon, and was charmed with this new inftance of Mr. Courteney's integrity.

The marquis, after having long puzzled himfelf with conjectures about the defign Mr. Courteney had formed, at length concluded that he had fome expectations from the earl of ——, his uncle, in favour of his fifter; and he was fo unfortunately circumftanced between his fa-

ther's avarice and Mr. Courteney's ſtrict principles of honour, that he was reduced to wiſh earneſtly for the ſucceſs of an expedient, which he would have diſdained, if he had been maſter of his own actions. Mr. Courteney at parting, which was in a few days, begged him to rely ſecurely upon his friendſhip, and to be mindful of the promiſe he had given him, which the young lord again confirmed.

CHAP. XI.

In which the Hiſtory draws near to a Concluſion.

MR. Courteney found his ſhort abſence had rather endeared him to his aunt, than leſſened the ardor of her fondneſs; encouraged by her behaviour, he was ſeveral times upon the point of laying open to her the whole affair of his pupil's paſſion for Henrietta, and the difficulties which obſtructed ſo advantageous a match; difficulties which ſhe could ſo eaſily remove: but he hoped a great deal from the preſence of Henrietta, which it was highly probable would revive the old lady's tenderneſs for her, and from the interpoſition of Mr. Bale, who, it was not to be doubted, would enter heartily into the intereſt of his ward, for whom he expreſſed ſo tender an affection.

While he waited in anxious expectation of a letter from his ſiſter, to acquaint him when ſhe was to leave Paris, with her guardian, he was pleaſingly ſurpriſed with a billet from Mr. Bale himſelf, requeſting him to meet Miſs Courteney and him at the houſe of Mrs. Willis, where they were juſt arrived.

Mr. Courteney, without communicating this news to lady Meadows, haſtened to ſee his beloved ſiſter. The moment he entered the room, where ſhe was ſitting with her guardian and Mrs. Willis, ſhe flew to receive him with a tranſport of joy. He embraced her tenderly; and Mr. Bale advancing to ſalute him, he in the politeſt manner thanked him for his generous care of Henrietta.

Mr. Bale was extremely pleaſed to hear that ſhe might depend upon an affectionate reception from her aunt. 'And now, my child,' ſaid he; for ſo he tenderly affected to call her, 'ſince I have delivered you ſafe into

the hands of your brother. I will leave you, and a day or two hence I will visit you at your aunt's, and settle your affairs in a manner which I hope will not be disagreeable to you.'

Henrietta, who, from some past conversations with him, well knew the kind purport of these words, by a grateful look and a respectful courtesy, expressed her acknowledgment. Mr. Courteney, seeing him prepare to leave them, begged he would favour him with a few moments private conversation. Mr. Bale readily consented; upon which Mrs. Willis shewed them into another room, and returned to load her dear Miss Courteney with a thousand tender caresses.

Mean time Mr. Courteney gave the friendly guardian of his sister a brief account of the marquis's passion for her, and the conduct he had observed in that affair. He added, that he believed it would be easy to engage the duke's consent to his son's marriage with Henrietta, provided her aunt would act as generously towards her, as she had formerly given her reason to expect.

'From several hints,' said he, 'which lady Meadows has thrown out, and from the great kindness she expresses for me, I am apprehensive that she intends to transfer her bounty from my sister to me; but as my circumstances, though not affluent, are easy, and as I have nothing so much at heart as the happiness of my friend and my sister, I will most chearfully relinquish in her favour all my expectations from lady Meadows. The prospect of so advantageous a match will probably have some weight with her aunt; and the mention of it will come with propriety from you, Sir, as the guardian of Henrietta. Lady Meadows will then explain herself clearly; and we shall have an opportunity given us of pressing her to remove, by her generosity, the only obstacle that obstructs my sister's advancement.'

Mr. Bale was prodigiously affected with the uncommon nobleness of this proceeding. He took the young gentleman's hand, and, giving it an affectionate shake, 'I shall love and honour you while I live,' said he, 'for this generous proposal: doubt not of my ready con-

currence in every meaſure for your ſiſter's advantage. I love her as well as if ſhe was my own daughter; and the inconveniences ſhe has ſuffered through the folly and imprudence of ſome of my family, require that I ſhould make her amends, by doing every thing in my power to make her happy.'

'I will wait upon lady Meadows,' purſued he, 'to-morrow in the afternoon, and then we will talk over this affair.' Mr. Courteney told him, he would prepare his aunt for the viſit he intended her. After which, Mr. Bale went away, and he joined his ſiſter and her friend. A coach being ordered, they took leave of Mrs. Willis, whom Henrietta promiſed to viſit again very ſpeedily. Mr. Courteney had ſome diſcourſe with his ſiſter as they went, concerning the marquis; but carefully avoided mentioning his deſign to her, leſt he ſhould raiſe hopes which might be unhappily diſappointed.

Henrietta was under ſome perturbation at the thoughts of appearing before her aunt, whoſe diſpleaſure againſt her, and unjuſt ſuſpicions, all recurred to her memory; but the reception the old lady gave her, immediately effaced thoſe impreſſions: it was perfectly kind and affectionate, without the leaſt mixture of upbraiding or reproach.

'I had a mind to ſurpriſe you, Madam,' ſaid Mr. Courteney, who with infinite pleaſure beheld his ſiſter ſo tenderly embraced by her aunt. Lady Meadows aſſured him, that he had ſurpriſed her very agreeably; and, again embracing Henrietta, told her, that her good friend, the counteſs of ——, had been very laviſh in her praiſe, and had acquainted her with ſeveral circumſtances of her conduct, which had raiſed her highly in her opinion.

'I ſuppoſe you will not be very much grieved,' added the old lady, ſmiling, 'to hear that your former lover lord B—— is married to the citizen's daughter.'

'No, indeed, Madam,' replied Henrietta, 'they ſeemed to be formed for each other.'

'They are not very happy, I hear,' ſaid lady Mea-

dows; who, having fallen upon the article of domeftic news, related a great number of anecdotes concerning her acquaintance, fome of which Henrietta had often heard before. The old lady's fondnefs for talking at length gave way to her curiofity to hear every thing that happened to her niece during their feparation.

Henrietta gratified it with difcretion, fuppreffing whatever might tend to revive difagreeable remembrances. She was now put into poffeffion of her former apartment, and had an opportunity that night to congratulate her old friend Mrs. White (who affifted her to undrefs) upon her being reinftated in the favour of her lady.

CHAP. XII.

Which concludes the Hiftory.

THE next day Mr. Courteney informed lady Meadows, that Mr. Bale intended to wait on her, and hinted that he had a match to propofe for Henrietta, which he hoped fhe would approve.

Lady Meadows, who had already taken her refolution with regard to both brother and fifter, told him, that fhe was very defirous of feeing her niece fettled; and that fhe was determined never to oppofe her inclinations, being convinced that her virtue and prudence were to be entirely depended upon.

Mr. Bale came according to his appointment; and, being foon after left alone with lady Meadows, he acquainted her with the whole affair between the marquis of —— and Henrietta, as he had received it from Mr. Courteney; and, obferving that the old lady was dazzled with the profpect of her niece becoming a dutchefs, added, that the want of a fuitable fortune fhould not hinder the advancement of Henrietta: 'for whatever you defign for her, Madam,' faid he, 'I will double; fo great is my regard for her, and admiration of her virtues.'

Lady Meadows, with reafon, thought this a very generous propofal. She complimented him upon it; and, ftepping to her cabinet, took out a box that contained her will, and another deed which had been drawn

up, while Mr. Courteney was in the country with the duke of ——, but were nôt yet executed. She put the papers into Mr. Bale's hands, and deſired him to read them, ſaying, 'you will there ſee, Sir, what I intend to do for my nephew and his ſiſter.'

Mr. Bale opened the firſt, which was the will. He found ſhe had conſtituted Mr. Courteney her heir, leaving him her whole eſtate, charging it only with the ſum of ten thouſand pounds, to be paid his ſiſter on the day of her marriage. The other paper contained a ſettlement of three hundred pounds a year upon Mr. Courteney during her life.

Mr. Bale, who knew the young gentleman's ſentiments, propoſed to lady Meadows to ſend for him, and acquaint him with her intentions. To this ſhe readily agreed. Mr. Courteney turned pale when he heard the moderate ſum deſigned for his ſiſter; and, after expreſſing his gratitude to lady Meadows for the favour ſhe ſhewed him, in terms the moſt reſpectful and affectionate, he earneſtly conjured her to let Henrietta be at leaſt an equal ſharer with him in her kindneſs. He urged, as a motive to her to comply, the very advantageous match that was propoſed to his ſiſter. He expatiated on the marquis's tender and faithful paſſion for her; and touched with great delicacy upon the ſentiments Henrietta could not avoid entertaining for a young nobleman, who had loved her with honour, even when ignorant of her birth, and when ſhe was under very humiliating circumſtances.

Lady Meadows interrupted him with the moſt flattering praiſes of his diſintereſtedneſs; but declared that her reſolution was unalterable. 'Your ſiſter will have ten thouſand pounds,' ſaid ſhe; 'this is no deſpicable fortune: and ſince there is ſo much love on the ſide of the marquis, there is no doubt but it will be thought ſufficient.'

Mr. Bale explained the old lady's meaning, by telling him what he propoſed to do for Miſs Courteney, and preſenting the young gentleman's acknowledge-

ments: 'You have sufficiently shewn your regard for your sister,' said he, 'and I am of opinion we ought not to press lady Meadows any more on this subject; she has acted nobly by you both.'

The lady was extremely flattered by the praise Mr. Bale gave her; and, to prevent any more solicitations from her nephew, she signed the papers immediately, which Mr. Bale, at her request, witnessed.

Mr. Courteney said every thing that gratitude and politeness could suggest, upon her presenting him the settlement; yet there was an air of concern upon his countenance, which Mr. Bale observing, took an opportunity to desire him, in a whisper, to meet him at a coffee house (which he named to him) that evening, having something to say to him, which he hoped would make all things easy.

Mr. Courteney promised to attend him. He then begged lady Meadows not to let Henrietta know what had passed with regard to the marquis. 'At present,' said he, 'she considers this marriage as impossible to be effected, and so I would have her consider it, till I am sure that the duke will make no objection to the fortune that is designed her.' Lady Meadows approved of his caution; and Mr. Bale was desired to visit her in her own apartment, and acquaint her with the dispositions made by her aunt.

Henrietta expressed the highest satisfaction at what had been done for her beloved brother, and, with the greatest sweetness, acknowledged her obligations to her aunt for the provision she had made for her: but when Mr. Bale acquainted her with the addition he designed to make to the fortune her aunt would give her, tears of tenderness and gratitude overspread her face, and she could utter no more, than, 'O! Sir, how generous— how kind is this—how shall I repay such unexampled goodness—'

Mr. Bale interrupted her soft exclamations, to lead her down stairs to her aunt, to whom she paid her acknowledgments with inimitable grace, and congratulated her brother with so sincere a joy, that he, who

knew how much she was likely to lose by his good fortune, was moved almost to tears.

Mr. Bale a short time afterwards took his leave, and went to the coffee-house, where he had appointed Mr. Courteney to meet him. He was soon followed by the young gentleman, whose mind was under great agitations on his sister's account.

'One would hardly imagine,' said Mr. Bale to him, smiling, 'that you have just been declared heir to a good estate, you look like one disappointed and unhappy.'

'I am indeed disappointed, Sir,' replied Mr. Courteney; 'I had laid a plan to make my sister and my friend happy: but my aunt's partiality has broke all my measures for the present.'

'Then you intend,' said Mr. Bale, who had taken particular notice of his last words, 'to make some addition to your sister's fortune, when the estate comes into your hands?'

'Certainly, Sir,' replied Mr. Courteney, 'I should but ill deserve it, if I did not.'

'It must be confessed,' resumed Mr. Bale, 'that you are a very good brother.'

'All that I can do for my sister, Sir,' said he, 'will be but bare justice; but your generosity to her can never be enough admired.'

'No more of that,' interrupted Mr. Bale. 'I love your sister: she is a worthy young woman; I am grieved to think so noble a match for her, should meet with any obstruction for the want of a fortune. What do you think the duke will expect?'

'The lady he has proposed to his son, Sir,' said Mr. Courteney 'has twenty thousand pounds; and it would have been my pride and happiness to have prevailed with my aunt to make my sister's fortune equal to that.'

'Is it possible!' cried Mr. Bale, surprised. 'Why fifteen thousand pounds is at least one third of your aunt's fortune?'

'My sister,' said Mr. Courteney 'has a right to expect it. The whole would have been her's but for some unlucky accidents, and the strange partiality of lady Meadows for me. All that I can now do is, to let the marquis know, that my sister will have ten thousand pounds paid on the day of her marriage, and ten thousand more on the death of her aunt. The duke loves money; and I greatly doubt whether all his son's solicitations will make him relish this reversionary ten thousand pounds.'

'We will not put it to the hazard,' interrupted Mr. Bale, 'since you are determined to act thus generously by your sister, I will lay down the money myself, and all the security I require, is your bond for the re-payment of it, when your aunt's estate comes into your possession.'

Mr. Courteney was so overwhelmed with surprise, joy, and gratitude, for this unexpected, noble offer, that, during some moments, he was unable to utter a word. But this silence, accompanied with looks the most expressive that can be imagined, was more eloquent than any language could be. Recovering himself at last, he was beginning to pay the warmest acknowledgments; but Mr. Bale would not suffer him to proceed.

'I am impatient,' said he, 'for the conclusion of this affair. Write to your friend immediately, and let him know that your sister's guardian will treat with the duke his father, whenever he pleases.'

Mr. Courteney, at his reiterated request, took leave of him, and went home, in order to communicate this joyful news to his friend. Hearing that lady Meadows and his sister were engaged in company, he went to his own apartment, and wrote a short letter to the marquis, in which he acquainted him, that his sister being restored to the favour of her aunt, he had it now in his power to assure him, that if he continued in the same sentiments towards her, and could prevail with his grace to authorise them by his consent, he was impowered by her aunt and her guardian, to declare that her fortune would be twenty thousand pounds.

Having ſealed and diſpatched this letter to the poſt, he joined the company below-ſtairs, with looks ſo full of ſatisfaction, and a behaviour animated with ſuch extraordinary gaiety, that lady Meadows was more than ever delighted with him, concluding that the noble proviſion ſhe had made for him, was the ſource of his joy: but Henrietta, who knew her brother better, and who beſides ſaw ſomething particular in thoſe looks, which he from time to time gave her, felt ſtrange flutterings in her gentle boſom: hopes checked as ſoon as formed; wiſhes ſuppreſſed as they roſe. In theſe perturbations, ſhe paſſed that night and the three following days.

Mean time the marquis, having received Mr. Courteney's letter, was ſo ſurpriſed at this ſudden change in the fortune of Henrietta, that he read it over ſeveral times before he could perſuade himſelf what he ſaw was real. His firſt emotions were all tranſport: every obſtacle to his marriage was now removed; and he might ſolicit his father's conſent, with a certainty almoſt of not being denied. Yet a ſentiment of delicacy and tenderneſs made him regret, that it was not in his power to convince Henrietta of the diſintereſtedneſs of his love, and for ſome moments rendered him inſenſible of his preſent happineſs.

The duke came into his chamber, while he was reading the letter the twentieth time, and ſo intently, that he did not perceive his entrance. When ſuddenly raiſing his eyes, and ſeeing his father, who, ſuſpecting that this letter, which he ſeemed to read with ſo much emotion, came from his miſtreſs, was looking earneſtly on him.

"O! my lord," cried he, "there is nothing wanting to make me perfectly happy, but your conſent to my marriage with Miſs Courteney. See, my lord, what her brother writes: her brother, who till now has ſo obſtinately oppoſed my paſſion!"

The duke took the letter out of his hands, and having read it, returned it to him again without ſpeaking a word, and walked to the other end of the room. The marquis, who ſaw nothing unfavourable in his looks,

followed him, and, throwing himſelf at his feet, conjured him not to oppoſe his happineſs any longer. The duke deſired time to conſider; but his ſon would not give over his ſolicitations, till he had obtained leave of him to viſit Miſs Courteney, and to declare that his addreſſes had the ſanction of his conſent.

The happy marquis gave orders inſtantly for his poſt-chaiſe to be got ready, which his father at firſt did not oppoſe; but, after reflecting a little,

'Can you not rein in your impatience for a few days?' ſaid he to him; I intend to be in town next week: I ſhall then have an opportunity of ſeeing the young lady, and (ſince you are ſo obſtinately bent upon the match) of talking to her aunt and her guardian.'

The marquis would not diſoblige his father, by making any objections to this little delay, grievous as it was to him; but retired to write to Mr. Courteney, whom he acquainted with the duke's intentions, and, anticipating the tender name of brother, poured out his whole heart in the warmeſt expreſſions of love, friendſhip, joy, and every ſoft emotion with which he was agitated.

Mr. Courteney having communicated this letter to Mr. Bale, he agreed that it was neceſſary to make lady Meadows acquainted with the ſteps they had taken in the affair. She entered with a good grace into the generous deſigns of her nephew in favour of his ſiſter.

'If I had done more for her,' ſaid ſhe to him, ſmiling, 'you would not have had an opportunity of doing ſo much.' Mr. Courteney kiſſed her hand with a tender and reſpectful air.

'Go,' ſaid ſhe, with a look that ſhewed ſhe was highly pleaſed, 'go, and tell your ſiſter this good news, and tell her alſo that I am impatient to embrace and congratulate her.'

Mr. Courteney willingly obeyed her. He went to Henrietta's apartment, and, ſeeing her penſive and melancholy, he began to rally her upon her tenderneſs for the marquis. She bore it with great ſweetneſs, but not without ſome ſurpriſe; for her brother was uſed to be very delicate and reſerved upon that ſubject. By de-

grees he assumed a more serious tone; and at length gave her to understand, that the marquis was now permitted by his father to pay his addresses to her.

Henrietta blushed and trembled from the moment her brother began to speak to her in a serious manner. Her emotions increased as he proceeded; yet she laboured to conceal them, till Mr. Courteney, explaining to her what Mr. Bale had done for her, which necessarily included his own generous gift, that innate delicacy, which had forced her joy to be silent, suffered her gratitude to shew itself in the most lively expressions. Lady Meadows came into the room, and gave a seasonable interruption to these tender effusions of her heart, which Mr. Courteney had listened to with a kind of painful pleasure. She embraced her niece, and congratulated her on her happy fortune.

Miss Courteney, who had now reason to expect a visit from the marquis, was not much surprised a few days afterwards to see his equipage at the door. After a few moments conversation with Mr. Courteney, he was introduced to lady Meadows, who received him with great respect. Henrietta blushed a little when he appeared, but recovered herself, and received the tender and respectful compliment he made her with her usual grace.

A great deal of company coming in soon afterwards, he found means to engage her apart for a quarter of an hour. Their conversation was such as might be expected between persons of their sense and politeness, who loved each other with the utmost tenderness, and now for the first time saw themselves at liberty to declare their sentiments. Henrietta did not scruple to own to the man, who had so nobly merited her esteem, that her heart had received a most tender impression for him; and this soft acknowledgment completed her lover's felicity.

Mr. Courteney waited upon the duke the next morning, and had the pleasure to hear from his own mouth, that he was entirely satisfied with his son's proceedings. His grace visited lady Meadows the same day; and was so charmed with Henrietta, that he scarce discovered less

impatience than his ſon, for the concluſion of the marriage. Every thing being agreed on between the duke and Mr. Bale, with regard to ſettlements, the writings were drawn up with all convenient ſpeed, and a day appointed for the marriage.

Lady Meadows, though a Roman catholic, allowed the ceremony to be performed at her houſe: after which, the new-married pair, with the old lady, the duke, Mr. Bale and Mr. Courteney, ſet out for his grace's country-ſeat.

The charming marchioneſs did not make her firſt public appearance in town till late in the enſuing winter; when her beauty, her ſufferings, her virtue, and her good fortune, were for a long time the ſubjects of converſation.

Mr. Courteney, happy in the conſcious integrity of his heart, happy in the ardent affection of his ſiſter and the marquis, and the eſteem of all who knew him, was, by the death of lady Meadows, which happened a few months after his ſiſter's marriage, enabled to diſcharge his obligation to Mr. Bale. His generoſity was not long unrewarded: an opulent heireſs fell deſperately in love with him; ſhe was related to the duke, who intereſted himſelf ſo warmly in the affair, that the marriage was ſoon concluded.

Lord B——, as has been obſerved already, lived very unhappy with his plebeian lady. The ſight of the charming Henrietta renewed his paſſion. Tortured with remorſe, diſappointment, and deſpair, he had recourſe to the bottle, and fell an early ſacrifice to intemperance.

Miſs Woodby, who had always a violent paſſion for a red-coat, liſtened to the ſighs of a young cadet, and married him in a week after their firſt acquaintance. Her excuſe for this precipitancy was, that the *lovely youth* would certainly have ſtabbed himſelf, if ſhe had delayed his happineſs any longer. With part of her fortune he bought a commiſſion, and ſpent the reſt in a few months. After which, he went abroad with his regiment, leaving her in an obſcure retirement, to bewail

his abſence and ſooth her love-ſick heart, with hopes that he would return more *paſſionate* than ever, and lay all his laurels at her feet.

Miſs Belmour, forſaken by her lover, became a proſelyte to the Roman catholic religion, and retired to a convent, where the nuns wrought her up to ſuch a degree of enthuſiaſm, that ſhe ſettled her whole fortune upon the community, and took the veil; but, ſoon afterwards, repenting of this raſh ſtep, ſhe died of grief, remorſe, and diſappointment.

Mrs. Willis was generouſly rewarded by the marchioneſs, for the many kind and faithful ſervices ſhe had received from her: and Mr. Bale, who highly eſteemed her for her behaviour to his beauteous ward, ſettled her huſband in ſuch an advantageous way, that in a few years he made a conſiderable fortune.

The younger Mr. Bale found, in the inceſſant clamours of a jealous wife, a ſufficient puniſhment for his treacherous deſigns on Henrietta; and it was not without great difficulty that he was reſtored to his father's favour.

Every branch of the Courteney family made frequent advances towards a reconciliation with the marchioneſs and her brother: but generous as they were, they had too juſt a ſenſe of the indignities they had ſuffered from them, to admit of it; and, in this ſteady reſentment, they had, as it uſually happens with ſucceſsful perſons, the world on their ſide.

FINIS.